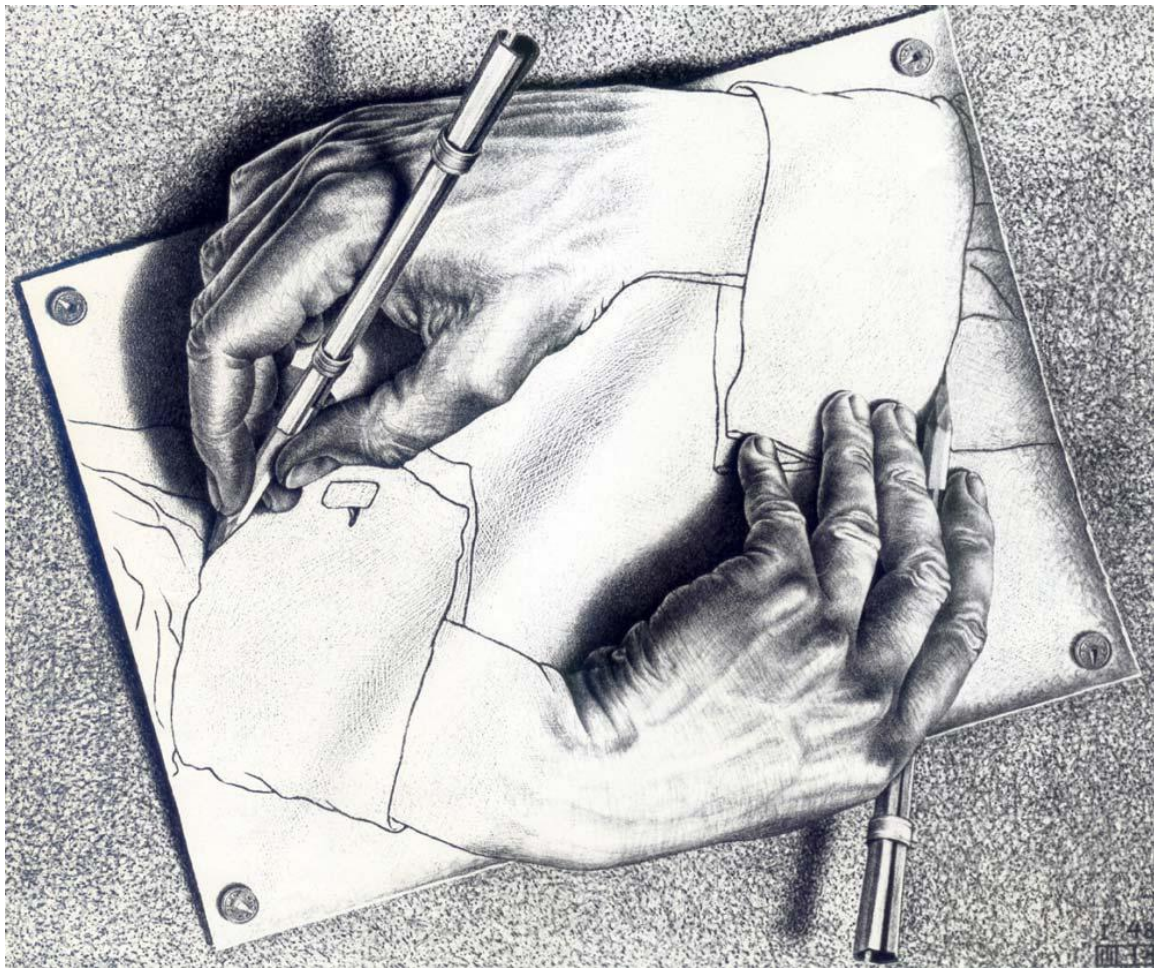


Pen & Pencil Magazine

Theme: Living in Extraordinary Times



Volume Three: Spring 2020

Volume Three: Pen & Pencil Magazine

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Obelisk Press
Vancouver, BC, Canada

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Cover picture: Escher, Two Hands

If you have a submission for the **Pen & Pencil Magazine** feel free to contact the magazine.

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Pen & Pencil Welcomes Submissions

Obelisk Press of Vancouver is proud to publish the third edition of *Pen & Pencil Magazine* which serves to feature the work of aspiring writers. The *Pen & Pencil Magazine* welcomes submissions on a twice yearly basis. The Theme for this volume is *Extraordinary Times* – since we are in the midst of a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, we do live in Extraordinary times!

The *Pen & Pencil Magazine* board is comprised of the unpaid volunteers: Please feel free to send your short story, prose, poetry and artwork submissions to the Editor in Chief at

pbruskiewich @ gmail.com.

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

For several of the contributors to the magazine, it is their first occasion to be published. Congratulations! In this edition we also include a French piece.

The theme for the **Fall 2020** edition of *Pen & Pencil Magazine* will most likely be set by the contributors and their submissions.

Be forbearing when you compare us
with those who were the perfection of order,
we who everywhere seek adventure,
... we are not your enemies.

We would give you vast and strange domains
Where flowering mystery waits for him would pluck it.
There are new flames and colors never glimpsed
a myriad bodiless phantoms
on which we must confer reality.

We would explore beauty,
... enormous, silent lands.
There is a season for the hunt
... and for the huntman's return

Have compassion for us who are
already fighting on the frontiers
of the boundless future ...

Have compassion for our errors,
... compassion for our sins.
Soyez indulgent ... pitié pour nous.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Short Stories

Roses of Mexico City by Gary McCrae

[**San Francisco**] During the early 1960's, this city the ancient capital of Mexico was in the throes of expansion. A population of eight million destined to overflow to 24 million by the mid-1990's.

The metro is built upon the old city of the Aztecs – a very slow process for artifacts – whole palaces and ancient temples are being unearthed which adds to the archeology of this magnificent and intriguing city.

Over the foundation of the largest Aztec pyramids had been built the grand Roman Catholic Cathedral on the plaza known as the Zócalo. This area was also bordered by the Presidential palace – the Municipal Council and the balconied town houses of the Colonial aristocracy. Southeast of this great plaza and behind this immediate area lay the huge wholesale market place *La Merced*, where fresh vegetables and flowers were brought in from the vast countryside of Mexico.

This large metropolis now known as Mexico City had since 500 A.D. been known as Teotihuacán, and then had a population of 100,000 people sprawled over twelve square kilometers, an area even larger than Imperial Rome.

The Toltecs took over from the Teotihuacáans, followed by the Tepanecas and it was they who allowed the Aztecs that had migrated down from the north to settle in what is now known as the Chapultepec district. This

district of Mexico City is now situated at the end of the Reform boulevard situated down from the Alameda.

From this area they had been subdued and then removed by a neighboring tribe. The Aztecs fled to an island south called Tenochtitlan and their settlement there in 1325 is now considered the official founding date for Mexico City. Eventually the Aztecs tied this island with an irrigation canal back to the district originally settled in Chapultepec.

My first introduction to this ancient city was by plane on an early January evening with a myriad of sparkling lights below. Upon landing we were driven through the teeming streets of Mexico City with vibrant humanity overflowing from all around. Ensconced at the *El Presidente* luxury hotel on the Alameda with a Diego Rivera mural overlooking the main lobby, this was an ideal place to set out, explore and discover this tantalizing Colonial city.

First on the agenda, which was the reason that drew me first to visit Mexico City, was a visit to the University of Mexico City. A few years earlier a wonderful offer had come my way which encompassed sending me to University for extended study of the history and arts for this area of the Universe. This offer was one I had never taken up and I was now anxious to visit and cover the campus. I had recently graduated from the world famous *Rudolph Schaeffer School of Color* in San Francisco and the recently attained knowledge would open up new vistas for me.

A few days later after my arrival and a visit to the grand floating gardens south of the city left over from the ancient Aztec civilization, I acquired from the hotel directions for going out to the University. This had sounded all very easy when the hotel had directed me to stand along the Alameda and step on a bus which would take me directly to the University. Upon standing for half an hour, I realized that all the buses coming I could not differentiate one from the next on the arrival of the continuing buses.

Hearing a young couple conversing in English, I stepped over and enquired if they could help me on which specific bus I should get on, but they were no help to me, as they were not familiar with the local numbered buses. Whereupon I saw a bus coming which seemed like the one I had been waiting for. As I readied myself for boarding I felt someone tap me on the shoulder and heard a voice saying – ‘excuse me Séñor, this is your bus to the University.’ Looking around I saw a lovely Senorita with extremely large dark eyes milling at me. I thanked her and proceeded to board the bus and immediately realized I could not figure out how much the fare would be. Instantly money was put in front of me, from behind me, and the same voice saying ‘*it was all taken care of Séñor.*’

The same Senorita was smiling beside me and I wished to immediately reimburse her, but she wouldn’t take my money.

This was my introduction to Nora, for it was her way of getting to know me, and so we proceeded to sit and talk and the lengthy way out to the University of Mexico. This young lady had studied at the University’s school of

languages and was an interpreter at the Hotel Alameda owned and operated by the Westin Hotel chain. She spoke fluent English and this gave her an excellent opportunity to offer me a sightseeing synopsis, when we arrived at the University. Of course I accepted and we had a most enjoyable afternoon going back and forth on the campus; admiring the grand mosaics on the tall towers and the lower buildings. It then became time for me to return downtown and she also decided to ride back downtown having long forgotten the reason why she to come out originally to the University. So we had another good visit to the old city near the old Presidential Palace and to show her my appreciation I invited her, and her sister (as chaperone) to join me that same evening for dinner. My invitation was accepted and we would meet at my hotel, which was conveniently situated.

In those years my wardrobe consisted of some beautiful and handsome suits which had been custom made for me in San Francisco (I should perhaps tell you I had bright red hair at the time). For that evening, I selected one of them in dark midnight blue, in beautiful fine wool serge bordering on cashmere; a perfect suit for dining out late evening in Mexico City. When the two sisters arrived they were both dressed elegantly. Nora herself had on a beautiful wool evening suit in deep grey trimmed with the black silky hide of the unborn café covering the front of her jacket – softer and finer looking than any velvet fabric. This was still legal in Mexico for the mother cow had to be killed to obtain the unborn calf, and it is not legal to be used or sold in the United States. We discussed various places for dinner and they both hoped we could all go to the Hotel Isabella, which was the most elegant hotel and the place for the *haute culture* people of Mexico City to be seen in.

I already having knowledge of this ... but this didn't appeal to me, so I asked the sisters if they knew of a real and authentic restaurant nearby which served the fine cuisine of Mexico. Immediately 'Si' was there response as their father had recently – within the last week in fact – taken them both there. But ... this would entail quite a drive to the distant outskirts of the city ... which intrigued me even more. A sleek black limousine was summoned and we drove for miles from my hotel and arrived almost an hour later at the gates of what appeared to be a very elegant country club – perfect – with vast rolling manicured lawns amongst the trees and the grand restaurant was in a great sweep before our eyes – looking out over these great slabs of plate glass across the whole rambling colonial façade. While we arrived unannounced and had no reservations, the two sisters were acknowledged and we were ushered into a very large dining area filled with the most beautifully dressed people imaginable. Heavy linens were on each table, each touching the floor along with bright shiny silverware and heavy crystal. The waiters were all tuxedoed with none speaking English and the overlarge menus were all in Spanish – perfect!

I suggested to the two sisters that they make the menu selections for the three of us and to be sure and order plenty of whatever they wanted. 'Si Señor – we will do just that!' We chatted and eventually their food arrived which was placed in front of us and it looked like wonderful authentic Mexican cuisine. My plate was then brought to me and it consisted of a very huge beef steak along with a very large pile of French Fries, for they had picked out a dish that they thought would make a young *Gringo* happy. Gringo means 'green' in Spanish, referring to the color of American dollars.

This is why Mexicans call Americans ‘gringo.’ I am actually a Canadian originally from Victoria, but had spent several years at art school in San Francisco. When it comes to Americans and Canadians, Mexicans don’t always make a distinction if you come from north of their border.

I really only picked at my food all the while stealing admiring glances at the two young women enjoying their meals. Hoping my disappointment did not show, I suggested they order several more Mexican dishes which we all three could share. This was done – one of the platters contained the most truly sumptuous chicken breast enchiladas I had ever tasted before or since that evening. Whole chicken breasts had been used inside, along with wonderful condiments for the stuffing. This was all perfect for me and it turned into a wonderful dinner of Mexican dishes. The dinner lasted several hours.

After dinner I suggested we could all go dancing. The sisters knew of a wonderful night club not too far from the restaurant, and so there we went. And authentic it was – another place for only very wealthy Mexican City citizens who really could afford and enjoy luxury. The club was huge, and along with Latin American music, there was a fabulous floor show. Across the full length of the stage was the largest xylophone I had ever seen stretching a good ten meters across with 20 to 25 musicians all playing on it at the same time – and what music it was. I can still hear it today in my memory; and what a good time dancing – to tangos, cha cha chas and rumbas – for the next three hours.

Now Mexico City at the time, (the early 1960's) did not have the great number of people it has today. It was a great deal less safe for foreigners to travel through than today. One did have to take into consideration ones' safety while moving about, especially if any distance was involved. Upon departing the night club that evening, the two sisters and I arranged for a cab to pick us up and I had completely forgotten to request that the driver be able to speak English, which is very mandatory in any foreign city. We left the night club with the sisters giving the driver instructions in Spanish and of course we would drop them at home first, and then I would go on to my hotel downtown afterwards.

The cab drove for miles as to my great amazement we ascended up the wall of the great plateau driving ever upwards and steeper for some distance. Arriving at the top, the sight before us was astounding, for there on top of this great expanse the most futuristic city one could imagine appeared– all floodlit before our eyes – along with a full moon beaming across the whole mirage-like scene. Skyscrapers jutting across – bridges joining them like freeways – all laid out in great order and palatial form.

The sisters ordered the cab driver with directions to where they reside, and when we arrived there with polite thank yous and goodbyes took their leave ... and the cab proceeded onAlmost immediately it came over me a great fear that this driver did not possibly speak fluent English and we were in the middle of nowhere ... for within blocks we started to descend the plateau and leave the great vision behind us and we were in total darkness once again.

Almost with panic over me, I asked the driver if he spoke English with no response and continued in his slow and meticulous way. Nothing could be done but to hope he would drive me directly to my hotel for we were now in total darkness, with nothing but shrubs and trees on both sides of us. Suddenly out of the blue he started talking perfect English but not what I wanted to hear for he was marketing a lady of the night to me in most uncertain terms: the most beautiful girl in all of Mexico City for forty dollars and another one for much less, but she wasn't so pretty. My response was a sharp 'No!' which made him persist even harder, in fact so extremely persistent to where we were shouting at each – me yelling to be taken home immediately. At this point I was becoming fearful for I was dressed far too luxurious to be in such a situation.

We arrived at the bottom of the plateau in total darkness. Winding along a roadway we all of a sudden made an abrupt right angle turn in to an extended alley that appeared out of nowhere like it had risen out of the Earth. And ... it might have come up out of hell ... for there before me was a sight not to be believed.

The alley before me was lit with overhead lights which made it as bright as from the midday sun. It was here that I was looking at the night-world and a large portion of the netherworld of Mexico City. The length of three city blocks were teeming with people, filling that alley from wall to wall. As the limousine taxis wound its way t less than a snail's pace in this mob, they separated only enough to let the cab through. The whole scene before me

was as though it had been lifted out from the filmmaker “Fellini” and his infamous Italian movies. The most grotesque faces imaginable were passing my car continuously. Some were looking down in at me with faces pressed against the window peering right at me ...They all looked liked drugged zombies and no doubt were ... nothing in hell could ever possibly look worse. What a horror and bad nightmare for me and I was convinced the cab driver was taking me where he wanted to be in the beginning and I would have no say when presented to whatever underworld he wished to expose me to. These were, of course, all the night people of Mexico City, but it was the grotesque features on their faces that left the indelible mark on my memory. It seemed like an eternity to slowly wind our way through this teeming mass of sub-humans, all amassed in one alley. But suddenly we were out of it as quickly as we had come in to it and to my relief it was still dark but we were out of the alley! Ten minutes later we turned another abrupt corner and my hotel loomed up from the darkness. I was extremely angry – the cab driver had put me through an unnecessary ordeal, and as I was proceeding up the steps of my hotel, and I looked back he had the nerve to shout from his window – “Ah Sénor, why were you so afraid – I got you safely home.”

The following day a call came to my suite from Nora as they had enjoyed so much the evening before and would I be able to accept an invitation to their home for dinner the following evening. It did race through my mind about a book my Mother had read me one summer when I was home. It covered Mexico City families and how they bring to their homes unsuspecting suitors for their marriageable daughters, and this could be the stage for a surprise

wedding which they spring on them. Pushing these thoughts aside with the idea that I was old enough by now to handle such a situation and “yes, I could come” – the limousine would be dispatched to pick me up at my hotel at seven in the evening. Now mother had always instructed me to always take along a gift to the hostess, and this would be what I would do. Enquiring at the hotel front desk where to purchase flowers, they directed me over to the great flower market *La Merced*, many blocks directly behind the hotel. Finding the market I was flabbergasted to see the acreage which covered every type of flower, including exotic blooms from the furthest jungles over far reaching corners of the country. One of the first stalls I encountered had the most magnificent long stemmed roses, and this I kept in mind as I wound through the many faceted stalls all the more wonderful than the last. This took several hours looking at it and admiring the most colorful and exotic blooms – orchids upon orchids – bromeliads all in the lushest colors, That I had ever encountered, but was drawn back like a magnet to those beautiful roses with stems up to four or five feet long.

Finding myself back at the rose stand, the old Mexican lady who owned it was busy with a number of different customers. While waiting I began wondering what the connotation of roses might be in a foreign country which I was not all that familiar with. Stepping over I asked a beautifully dressed lady in a very handsomely tailored camel hair suit about taking some roses to a hostess. ‘Perfect,’ she declared, so it was set – roses it would be – I would but a few of the wonderful magenta and orange pink ones which were absolutely breathtaking. Not figuring out the exchange and when the old lady was free, I stepped over and let her know I would but ten dollar

American worth. Calling a grandson over to help her, they began to bring over bunches of roses much to their delight and the pile grew to around the height of my shoulders. This was shocking to me, but hadn't realized what ten dollars could buy at the time and at the same time I didn't have the heart to disappoint the old lady by telling her that I couldn't take all of them. But how would I get them back to the hotel? This the old lady solved easily by calling in five more grandsons to come and carry them, myself included, piled high with roses. The seven of us wound our way back to my hotel. What a sight it must have presented, not only many blocks back, but coming into the hotel lobby with such a mass of gorgeous roses. I had already decided I would request the hotel if they could hold them in cold storage for me until I would let them know I what I would do with them, for no way could these all be taken for a hostess of a dinner party.

Yes they would hold them for me until I would give them further instructions for their disposition. Arriving back to my suite, the telephone was ringing and on the other end was Nora with news of a change of plans. Her father was going to take us all for dinner to *el Villa Fontana* – one of the most outstanding restaurants in the city, as I had already known about and heard about this restaurant sometime before. This change of plans would be fine, for dining there would be a very rare experience, although I was somewhat disappointed to not have dinner in a Mexico City home. In the mean time my decision was just to leave the flowers with the hotel for now, and after everything was over I would give them instructions to perhaps place the rose in vases throughout the lobby.

During my stay in the hotel I made friends with an elderly, well travelled, couple from Oakland California who were somewhat perturbed hearing of these new plans, with young and impressionable me being the centre point of such an elaborate meeting. They requested that I meet them early in the hotel bar for cocktails at their invitation. I sensed they were anxious with worry in their voices to meet and observe Nora and her family. They too heard stories of *matrimonial entrapment*. They were a darling couple – very elegant and were like a very fine ersatz grandmother and grandfather to me.

That evening we gathered for cocktails – dry Manhattan Martinis – at the end of the lobby, far away from the entrance. Together we were all seated where we could observe Nora’s arrival. After our second cocktail what a happy time we were having when I saw Nora arrive at the front entrance of the hotel on the arm of her aristocratic father. And what an entrance it was. It stopped all traffic in that huge lobby. I waved and with a smile Nora spotted me. All eyes were upon this majestic pair coming across the floor towards us. She was dressed like a movie star, in a long black dress topped by a silk magenta opera cape flowing and billowing out to the floor with a slight train in the cape following in her footsteps. Her father was not exceptionally tall, but his regal bearing with an immaculate custom evening suit, complete with a black silk bowtie, carrying a beautiful golden headed cane topped the picture off like something out of a fairy tale.

They arrived over at where the three of us were sitting, chatting and I was busy introducing my friends all around when to my utter amazement I looked up and it was appearing like a mountain and a mirage moving over

from the front desk. With a second look I realized that the head counterman had taken it upon himself and decided of course these were who the roses were for and sent out six bellhops to carry them over and present them with great flourish to Nora. She was overwhelmed. Even her staid father staggered on his cane at sight a sight and no one was more staggered than I, and the first thing that came blurring from out of my mouth was “these are for your mother.”

Nora smiled when I said this for she knew in her heart perhaps why I had said this. Nora’s father, Mr. Riese, warmly thanked me for the roses. I took a liking to Nora’s father immediately for it was very obvious that he was cultured and that he had old family connections to this ancient and sophisticated City. While we said our goodbyes to the Oakland couple, the flowers eventually were all loaded into the limousine. Then Nora her father and I – barely finding room in the limousine – were now on our unbelievable ride to *el Villa Fontana* on the regal stretch of Reform Boulevard. We were absolutely engulfed in these magnificent roses – in the fact the car was so packed with these beautiful blossoms that many were hanging out the open windows. People stopped in the street to watch us pass.

Our arrival at the restaurant caused a flurry. Exactly as the lobby of the El Presidente Hotel, the whole el Villa Fontana restaurant came to a complete standstill on our being led through the lobby and up the tiers of banquet seats to be seated right in the middle of the establishment – with all eyes upon us! In her arms Nora carried a few dozen of the roses. I suspect all

eyes were on her and her alone, or perhaps her and her father. I sensed I was hardly noticed, except for perhaps my red hair.

Mon Dieu ... what an evening ... and it had just begun.

Now *el Villa Fontana* was famous not only in Mexico City, but the whole wide world over. The outstanding features beyond their superb cuisine was the strolling violinists of which each group consisted of approximately forty men playing the most romantic and beseeching music. Some of the music they played was Spanish, some Hungarian gypsy and some dreamy classical. Their musical reputation preceded them, and I had heard of their talents long before while I was in school in San Francisco.

While our waiter welcomed us to the restaurant and made arrangements to place Nora's roses in a silver vase on a small table, the musicians strolled over to serenade us. Such haunting music. I stole a glance around me. This restaurant was massive in size with extremely large isles to accommodate these groups of musicians strolling through and stopping to play at certain tables.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see that Nora's father was observing me closely, and that Nora was in turn observing her father. There was a triangle of sorts around the table. I should perhaps tell you that Mr. Riese either could not speak English or decided he would not. Nora did the interpretation and translation for us both. Besides I knew that people of consequence in Mexico know to learn and practice their English. I suspected at the very

least Nora's father could understand English, so I knew to be guarded in what I would say to Nora. How did I know this? Well, it was in the lobby of the hotel when he father asked of me whether I was gringo ... and he reacted ever so slightly – before Nora could translate for him – when I said “no I come from Canada.”

The musicians played a short introductory set for us and then moved on and the instant they were out of ear shot, and before we three could say anything the waiter reappeared carrying the grand leather bound menus. Once again they were all in Spanish so once again I deferred to Nora and her judgment. When I did this Nora's father did the same, which I sensed surprised Nora. I could see her father being so aristocratic as to not let his two daughters make any decisions for themselves. Nora beamed with her culinary responsibility.

I decided to test this hypothesis and asked Nora how her sister was today. Nora looked up with big eyes, then toyed with the gold chain and cross around her neck before saying, “she wanted to come too ... but papa thought four of us here for dinner would be a bit of a spectacle ...” Then dutifully she turned and Nora translated what she had just said to me to her father. Her father said one word ‘extravaganza ...’ and smiled over at me. Then Nora turned back to me and re-spoke the phrase “papa thought the four of us here for dinner would be a bit of a extravaganza ...” I knew now it was best I not to tip the triangle.

The waiter returned and the order was given and then from almost behind the waiter – as if he was his shadow – the sommelier appeared, produced

three wine menus for us and we set off to make the wine selection. Nora's father turned to his daughter and in Spanish said one word, and I knew what that word meant ... 'Champagne?' Nora turned to me and asked me "would you like Champagne with our dinner?"

"Champagne was a bit sweet for my taste for the main course of a meal ..."

Nora turned to her father and explained. He closed his wine menu then he waved his hand at me and said something in Spanish.

"My father wonders if you can select the wine for our dinner."

There's a bear trap if I ever heard one. Choose a fine wine, but not an expensive one! Not a middling one but nearer the top end ... I looked down at the jumble of Spanish words, then before I got lost in them a brilliant thought came to mind. I looked up and over at her and asked Nora "what have you ordered for us for dinner." As she explained in English I noticed the sommelier seemed uninterested. I was hoping he could understand English – but it was evident he couldn't. I had hoped to draw the sommelier into the decision making process, but I guess it was left to Nora and I to sort this out. She was game and so we discussed the dishes for a few moments then I asked her to translate for the sommelier. Without saying a word he pointed at a wine on the list. To my great relief it was neither inexpensive nor expensive. It was a Spanish wine I was familiar with. I nodded my head and said "si." The sommelier smiled his approval, as did Nora's father and collected up two of the three menus. Diplomatically leaving one at Mr.

Riese's elbow. I guess the Champagne might come later. I had tipped-toed around that bear trap!

Then started the twenty questions ... How we had met ? – as if he didn't already know for he probably had already given his daughter the 'third degree' – but I guess wanted Mr. Riese wanted to hear it in my own words. I was careful not to mention Nora's boldness, nor imply that I was in active search for female company here in Mexico City.

He asked me what I did ... then I sort of tripped up. I mentioned I had just finished art school in San Francisco ...

“Artista?” The look of surprise on Mr. Riese's face brought a look of embarrassment to Nora's face. I knew she knew but I immediately suspected that she had not told her father this ... Mr. Riese glared at Nora with the consternation of father thinking ‘over my dead body ...’

This brought a mix of feelings to my heart. On the one hand I was indignant that being an artist was considered so lowly by Nora's father, yet I also knew that I would not be invited to their home for a feast – wedding. I tried to keep a straight face but I suspect a bit of anguish showed on my face for Nora knew to ask “are you ok?” She again toyed with her necklace as she waited for my answer.

It was a sort of tell – her and her necklace. I smiled at her and simply said “art is what I seem to be best at ...” She turned to her father and translated

but once again I sensed he understood English for he immediately began to talk about the great artists of Mexico and Spain. It only took a few seconds for me to see that Nora was going to be fine (she stopped toying with her necklace) and while Mr. Riese talked about Valázquez and Goya I knew he was in his element. He made no mention of the modern Spanish artists like Picasso or Dali. It was if he was reciting a university lecture he once took in Spanish Art History. I could tell Nora had heard this lecture before for she was quite bored.

Perhaps the talk needed some living up? I was about to mention the wonderful murals I had seen at the University when out of the corner of my eye I saw Nora raise her hand to her necklace. Both her father and I turned to her and we could both see the nervousness in her eyes. This was the dramatic moment of our evening! Nora sensed the danger. So I decided to forgo mention of the murals and started to talk about some of the religious Spanish religious icons we had studied at art school. A sincere look of relief passed over Nora's face.

I guess if I had mentioned the Diego murals I would be a rebel amongst the aristocratic and this would have ruined the ambience of our evening. Just as I was about to exhaust my limited knowledge of Spanish religious icons our meal arrived to save us from our awkwardness.

As the meal progressed I sensed a gathering seriousness in the tone of Mr. Riese's conversation with his daughter. The conversation was still through Nora's interpretation. Nora's father seemed very concerned with her about

something serious and finally she turned to me and said her father was being insistent that I be told that her mother was not alive and he felt I should be told this as I had said that this was who the roses were for. Her eyes went stern for a brief second and I had to think what it was she was trying to tell me. The stern look on her father's face told me that I needed to act ever so carefully.

“Do you like the roses?” I asked her.

“I do ... very much ... but my father says he would rather see they go to a favorite aunt of mine ...” With those words I knew with certainty I would never be invited to a visit to their home. Again almost magically the next course of our meal arrived.

Nora in a coquette dig at perhaps the two men at her elbows had ordered me Oysters Rockefeller. Arranged on a large crystal platter set in shaved ice on an even larger sterling silver charger, were two dozen grand oysters.

She looked up at me and asked “Do you like oysters ... or would you prefer snails?” She was a clever one, for just a few weeks before there had been a movie review article about a scene in the feature film *Spartacus* where a slave (Tony Curtis) asks his Roman Master whether he preferred oysters to snails ...

I grinned knowingly at her. “I love eating oysters ... and never touch snails.”

He father did not ask Nora what we had just said, so I just set upon the plate. The huge oysters were done in the traditional way of fresh spinach and cheese au gratin broiled over them. I ate one. It was the best oyster I had ever tasted and fresher than one could imagine. I offered Nora and her father to taste several of them along with what they she had ordered for themselves. Mr. Riese declined but Nora enthusiastically said she would. “I have never tasted oysters before.” Instead of daintily lifting the oyster out of its shell with a spoon she lifted the entire oyster to her lips and slurped it down, leaving a little drop of juice on her chin. She caught it with her hand before the drop fell on her magnificent dress. Her father said nothing but gave her a stern look of disapproval. In her rebellious mood she asked me for another. Nora’s father shook his head slightly but all I could think of doing was shrug my shoulders. Nora enjoyed her second more than her first. I sensed she hoped I would offer her a third – but we had tempted fate twice already. A third time would be profoundly unlucky.

The wine matched their dishes but it did not match the oysters so I left my glass untouched and asked for mineral water instead. Sensing this miss match Mr. Riese ordered a bottle of Spanish sparkling white wine – champagne of sorts – the likes of which turned out to be a perfect match to the Oysters Rockefeller. Nora took a glass as well but Mr. Riese declined the pour by placing his hand over his glass and sternly warning the sommelier off with a few words in Spanish. The sommelier seemed a bit offended but set the half finished bottle between Nora and I into a large sterling silver cooler packed in ice. From time to time the sommelier took to

stopping by and topping up our glasses. My glass was topped but once while Nora's was topped three times.

Then we dined leisurely with very few words shared. I knew that cultured dining in the Spanish speaking world was expected to last two or three hours. While we ate Mr. Riese went silent and all but left Nora and I to talk between ourselves. It was at that point that I knew Nora's father understood English, for Nora was careful with what she said to me, and even how she said it, so we talked about what seemed like trivialities to me.

Nora asked me about my home and upbringing in Victoria and my time at the *Rudolph Schaeffer School of Color* in San Francisco. I in turn asked her about her growing up. And so a pleasant time was passed dining and chatting. No mention was made about her father and what he did and about her family, and her family fortune and the like. While I came from a well-to-do family, I had made sure I had avoiding mentioning anything too specific about my family and its fortune.

When the main dinner was over and before the dessert arrived, Nora excused herself to the powder room and this left me all alone with her father. Immediately the very cultured and well-mannered gentleman began talking to me in impeccable English with no trace of a Spanish accent. The fact that he spoke without an accent and impeccably was very profound, along with being utterly amazing!

I realized, until he had decided that he liked me, he would not converse with me directly. But now this point had arrived, and we had a very animated conversation. He told me that as a young man he had lived in California and had gone there from Mexico City to go to the University and had worked in *el Etats Unitas* for ten years before returning home where he had lived ever since. He expressed how much he liked me and the feeling was, of course, mutual. He offered me an invitation that upon a future return to Mexico City, as his guest he would take me and his two daughters on a tour through Mexico starting at Toas the old silver capital and continuing through the country for six weeks; staying, as he insisted, at the most luxurious accommodations available. I said that I was honored and would love to take this trip with him and his family, whereupon Nora returned to our table with a look of astonishment. She was surprised that her father and I had hit it off so well – he was conversing in English with me and she was delighted.

After a very animate and lively dessert we took our leave of this very renowned restaurant. As we exited I cast one last glance from the foyer over this dream world and the elegant atmosphere cascading from the tiered baquettes – tuxedoed waiters – bright silver – tinkling crystal- superb music – soft illumination – I knew instantly that this had been an evening of privilege. Collecting Nora's dozens of roses we made our grand exit to the waiting limousine which whisked us back along Reforma – a full moon engulfing the sparkling city, with roses filling the car with their aroma – back to my hotel where I would take leave in the morning for many more weeks of my travel – both by air and by ship – before I would once again

return home. It was with some sadness that I told Nora that I would be leaving Mexico City the following afternoon.

Early the following morning the sky was bright with sunshine and crisp with January air. I prepared to take my leave from this most colorful cosmopolitan city. As I stood waiting for a taxi to take me to the airport suddenly out of the crisp morning appeared Nora with some small keep-sake gifts for me. She was sad to see me go and asked me to write her and to come visit her again ‘in the not too distant future.’ It was awkward for me in that I hardly knew the young lady and well, I had obligations elsewhere, including back in San Francisco. The taxis arrived and we took our leave, shaking hands. One of the souvenirs Nora gave me was a small Spanish translation book she once used which when I opened later at the airport revealed some of the rose petals from the night before, carefully pressed between several of the book leaves.

Weeks later, after many thousands of miles of travel, I arrived back in San Francisco in the grand luxury P & O ocean liner coming through the Panama Canal. Immediately when I arrived at my apartment the doorman told me of the many telephone calls he had been receiving from Mexico City. Hardly after I set foot in my apartment that the telephone rang. It was Nora calling to inquire about my trip and welfare. In a few days I started to turn them down for they had become collect calls on my telephone. Finally, some weeks later, a short note arrived in the mail from Mexico City informing me that Nora and her father had been trying to get in touch with me to invite me to come to a grand fiesta which was to be held at her aunt’s ranch (that same

aunt who got all the roses) near El Paso Texas. This was to be a fourteen day celebration – which I knew very often evolved into a wedding celebration with the unsuspecting groom becoming the main object of hundreds of celebrants who congregated from all over the world for the occasion.

Many years later I attended an evening special celebration in the very grand gothic Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill in San Francisco. Part way through the service I glanced across the aisle and there seated to the left of me was an exact replica of the young Nora from many years before. It was even necessary for me to shake my head to look again, and be able to comprehend the vision before me.

At the end of the service I maneuvered to the beautiful young lady and the dark handsome fellow at her side. As we came through the grand and open magnificent bronze doors depicting the Gates of Paradise a beautiful full moon was bathing the whole top of Nob Hill in a glittering cover of radiance.

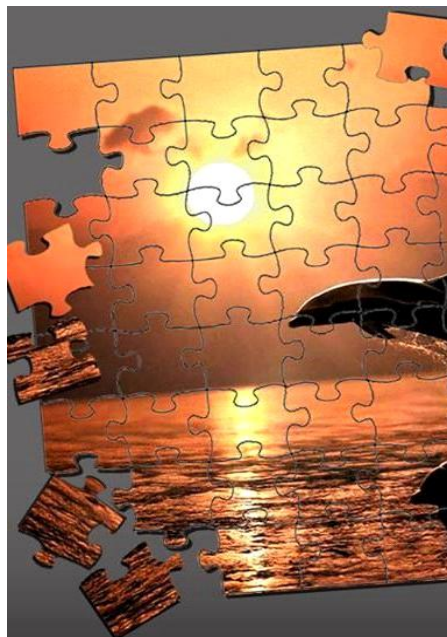
Striking up a conversation with the couple I discovered they were in San Francisco on their honeymoon and were staying at the old and very elegant Fairmont hotel just a block away. We talked about their visit to my city and how enthralled they were both to be here. As we arrived at the grand portico of their hotel I summoned the courage to ask the young lady what her mother's name was – Nora was the reply – and I assured her that she must and I was sure her mother also must be a beautiful lady. “Si Señor” was the

reply. ‘My mother is the most gracious and famous hostess of all Mexico City.’ Then the lovely couple turned and disappeared into the mist as they entered their hotel, and their future destiny which lay before them.

Out of mist of the night appeared the whole evening from thirty years before at *el Villa Fontana*. Was it a pang of guilt, or perhaps nostalgia? Was it the magic emanating from the moonlight – the mist – or combination of both? There before my eyes appeared Nora and her father, the many magnificent roses, the grand restaurant, the Oysters Rockefeller, the violinists with their beautiful and enchanting music, Nora in her grand majestic silk opera cape with her gracious father with his gold handled cane, their stately grace – and both of them giving me a wonderful, vibrant smile.

Living a Life You Don't Want by Barbara Miller

Under the circumstances I can understand why you feel you want to end your life. But wait! I felt this way for over 25 years. No one knew. Even now writing this, those who think they know me will be shocked. There were many times I pleaded with God to take me from this place. At times I was angry as I felt I didn't ask to come here to earth. My mom left me at three. Often, I wished she had aborted me. There's a theory that we pick our parents and this life. Did I? What the hell was I thinking?



My brother and I were born in the same year ... he in January and me in late November. I asked my dad what the hell were *you* thinking? He probably shouldn't have told a fourteen-year old that he had had a vasectomy. At an instant I felt a great mistake had been made. All the pieces to the puzzle of life ... and I was an extra piece with no place to fit in. I felt an over

whelming feeling of not belonging. I shouldn't be here! It was my first attempt to leave-die.

At only five, a traumatized foster child, the education system said my brain didn't work like the others. I was cast aside and segregated into my nick name, dummy. With this misdiagnoses, daily humiliation and indoctrination I spent the next 10 years of my life being *raped of an education*.

As an uneducated fifteen-year-old runaway my first job was washing dishes. I was much too shy and beaten to be a waitress. I also didn't want people to know my spelling was so bad. In school I didn't have to do anything and the writing I did was graded without the purpose of teaching me the correct way to spell. I received A's for spelling incorrectly.

At nineteen I had enrolled in Adult Basic Education as I needed to challenge the indoctrination that my brain didn't work. I had a burning desire to see what I was denied. I desperately wanted to leave the dummy group and join society in the academic group. In an argument with a teacher who gave me my first dictionary; I learned that I had been spelling wrong all that time. I was devastated. The A's I had received for my stories were false. I live with a hidden handicap now as I have two sets of English one is modified and the other is academic. Often, I can't tell if a word is wrong as they both look correct to me.

I had to find employment and not have pen in my hand. I was fearful of looking stupid. Speaking of employment what did the teachers think I would

do without education? Was I to get married and have kids? In grade seven preparing for grade eight I was told to pick an elective. Not understanding what that was my teacher said what kind of job do you want? I said JOB? I want a career!

Did he just roll his eyes?

Here in lies having the life I didn't want. I am a dishwasher who wasn't supposed to be born and I am terrified this is going to be for my entire life! I told God I would rather die! Contemplating killing myself was an on-going argument. To stay or to go. Pretending I had a choice. Or was having a choice empowerment? I felt I was in prison and it was going to be for life. Even prisoners get the death penalty.



There were two reasons why I absolutely could not die. At a very young age I had a *knowing* that something big and special was in my future, *but I would have to be older to see it*. The curiosity of what that was gave me hope that there was another life waiting for me. I had to age. In a moment I will tell you the other reason I couldn't die.

In my first foster home Pastor Daww came and picked us kids up and took us to the Baptist Church. At age four I was learning three things. *God loved me, forgiveness* and *we all have a Calling*. At seven my dad proved to the courts that he could look after me and my two brothers. We moved back home.

It was there and then at eight years old I had began pondering; *What is my Calling?* This is a condensed version of that moment with God. I didn't like the first vision I had after asking the question. I wondered what else I could do? I was aware of my horrible situation and additional trauma and suffering not mentioned here. I knew that the odds of me achieving anything of value ... was a huge long shot. Not only did I know it, I could feel it, like black cloud that followed over me.

My Calling and second vision was that I would grow up against all unbelievable circumstances not told here. *I would beat the ridiculous odds and live as an example that anything is possible!* When I asked God, "How will I do that?" I heard an internal voice shout, "*Stay Alive!*" I was eight. I had to age and stay alive. This would all make sense when debating to die. The voice *STAY ALIVE!* would always come back to me. I knew if I killed myself then I would have failed my calling; My mission. At nineteen I learned some people die for a cause; I decided to live for one. I would create another puzzle. I wasn't a mistake; I was a miracle!

When you are a dishwasher it doesn't mean you are mindless. It means your mind has time to think. I remember the moment I said to myself, "How am I going to get out of this?" *This life.*

This is one of the compelling factors in getting my grade twelve. I knew of a program, but you had to be nineteen to take it. Waiting to age was like doing time. In the meantime, I partied to have some fun. I call it emotional insurance. I was told because my father was an alcoholic I would be too. An inside, coy smile, filled my heart and I thought, "Oh yeah? Watch this".

Thirty five years later ... I speak on how not to get addicted to drugs and alcohol. I mapped out a code for when and how to have fun.

Meanwhile back in the kitchen I figured with no education I had no choice but to be like my dad and become self-employed. He was a locksmith and despite his shortcomings as a parent I knew he loved me. "Now what could I do to create my own work?" Eventually I came up with this; My work had three components. It had to help people, I had to love it and it must not be a fad.

With undiagnosed cancer that made me sleep sixteen hours a day I did in fact get my academic grade twelve. It was one of the hardest challenges I have had to face as I fought my way out of the segregated corner of despair while being sick. It was the first leg up into mainstream society. Now I had proof my brain works and the terrible misdiagnosis had been opinionated by a teacher. Learning forgiveness at four has saved my life. It helped me move

forward to the life I visualized at eight. I would age at a snail's pace with the ongoing suicidal debate as I faced the unbearable day to day life sober. I knew to accomplish my goals I had to avoid addictions. Because of this I knew I had to quit smoking.

At thirty I began the process of developing what is now known as the BMP Method: A way for addicts to quit nicotine. I began writing my book *How to Quit Smoking Even If You Don't Want To*. Then I decided to teach the method in live interactive events known today as boot-camps. I am not militant, but I do say to change and transform this addiction there's no pity party.

In 2000 my book was published. When you hear it takes twenty years to become an overnight success I can say it's true. My method was way ahead of its time and only now people are starting to look more seriously at my work ... as smokers think they have tried everything and still can't quit. I'm still standing waving the flag to my work. Many others before me along my journey said just don't give up. Now I get to say it.

Now, back to you living the life you don't want. This doesn't mean you want to die ... even if you feel like dying. It means you want to change your circumstances drastically and in doing so you will get another, better life. In order to do this, you will have to want it more than life itself. You have to be willing to die for the new life. My old life is dead. I am older now and I can see what was big and special.

I used to think it was my quit smoking method. It took several years for me to come to understand that what I have accomplished in my life against all insurmountable odds and trauma alone, is a big deal. I am special in that I was given the strength to pull off the impossible.

I made it! I have the life I saw in the vision at only eight. It took over forty years to get here. The hardest part of the journey is living two life paths simultaneously: the one I was born into and the one in my mind; carving by hand the path to success.

When I asked God what my Calling was the first vision I saw I me was standing in front of an audience. I said, “No way!”

Now that I pulled off the impossible of not only surviving arguments of suicide, I studied at home for over 25 years. Books that lead to me become authentically happy, healthy and successful with a rewarding career.

I knew I wanted to share how I did it. I felt this burning desire to share what I had learned along the way. I want to go back to that old life and get the others and show them the way out. It was like I had carved the path to freedom or the get out of jail card. But how would I share what I know? Then I saw myself standing in front of an audience. I have apologized to God for arguing.



Your life isn't ruined! You don't want the life you have. You and only you can change it. I am living proof that anything is possible. It all starts with believing in a dream. Or you could ask God, what is my calling? I encourage you to be ready with a pen in your hand. You may get visions in a flash. If you don't just keep repeating the question.

Please stay- You have undiscovered gifts.

The world needs you. Even if you can't see it now.

Just wait. And remember this ...

EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON.



Seeing Stars in the Paris Night Sky by Rose Lang

[**Paris**] When catastrophe besets us it is hard to imagine good. But we first have to be able to imagine good ... then goodness might manifest even in the midst of catastrophe.

Sort of like the philosopher Frankl describing the beauty of springtime from behind barb wire and downwind from the crematoria. It is a question of understanding what good might mean to us, even in the midst of catastrophe.

When the roof of our beloved Notre Dame caught fire and the flames lit up the night sky it was the end of the world for Paris. But good did come of this catastrophe, for when the flames were finally extinguish our Grand Cathedral still stood ... just without its roof. I had watched this great catastrophe from my balcony.

Although the smoke drifted in that day, I kept my French doors open. It was a religious experience of sorts for me ... the odor of the burning timber a sort of incense. The day after we *Parisiennes* began its reconstruction. I can still smell the smoke.

It is from this same balcony that my grandmother heard the distant guns firing towards Paris in 1915. It is from here she glimpse President Wilson in his car as he drove by in 1919. It is from here that she first set eyes on my grandfather, when her eldest brother brought him home from the *gare nord* to meet the family in January of 1923.

It is from this same place that my grandmother last set tearful eyes on her love when he left her forever in the summer of 1939. It is from this balcony that she wept of the tragic news of the summer of 1940 and from where she watched the Bosch goosestep into Paris ... and later threw kisses down upon General Charles de Gaulle and the Allied and French armies that had come to liberate Paris.

It is from this balcony that my mother watched the street riots of 1968 while she held me in her arms breast feeding me ... and it is from here that I grew up looking down and admiring this great city.

Each night I watch the endless and silent stream of ambulances that take the day's Covid-19 dead from the hospitals to the city morgue. Today Paris is once again deadly quiet ... a quiet that I am told has not been heard since the summer of 1940. Sadly, at night the lights of Paris are dimmed and the streets all but empty ... not even the cats go out. Our doors are all locked and people are scared even to breath!

My grandfather, an emigrant from near Krakow in Poland, came to this metropolis not soon after the 'Great Battle' to save Warsaw. Most people, even Europeans, have never heard of the 'Great Battle.' When you mention it, which people rarely ever do any more, it is assumed by the listener that it was some struggle from the 1940's. But alas they would be wrong by two decades and half of Europe.

The ‘Great Battle’ to save Warsaw occurred in the early 1920’s, while Europe and Paris was being swept by the Spanish Flu that killed many millions around the world. Poland had come into a renewed existence in the aftermath of the 1919 Paris Peace Treaty and right from its beginning the Red Army tried to gobble back up a free and independent Poland.

Yet even in the midst of the Spanish Flu, a pandemic equaled only by the medieval plague, the new-born Polish State was saved from ignominy by a few thousand brave men who came from all over Europe – Frenchmen, Austrians, Englishmen and, of course, many young Poles who fought to remain free. The Frenchmen, Austrians, Englishmen were fresh from the trenches of the Great War ... and had just a short time before been at odds with each other, but now they were the experienced ones, the officers, commanding a very inexperienced army of Polish volunteers, torn from the arms of their mothers in many cases and barely able to shave. And many of these young men did not live to see the day their beards would grow!

These young Poles fought against impossible odds and pushed back the Red Army and so a proud Warsaw lived on for nearly two decades, free and happy, before a great catastrophe beset it, first from the West and then from the East.

A Polish Home Army was there to fight a second and a third ‘Great Battle’ and while they were brave and determined their entire world crumbled into dust. Some stood beside Frankl while he spoke of philosophy and the need to go on living, some shook the hand of St. Peter, and some were buried for

ever under the rubble that had snuffed their lives out, brought down upon them by the murderous Stukas from the West and the silence of the artillery from the East. Can there really be a distinction?

In the 1920's the 'Great Battle' had been won. And from it emerged a brave Pole, my grandfather. He was a young man with wanderlust. He had grown up in a distant, provincial corner of Poland, not that far east of Krakow. It was a world of thatched huts and nesting storks. It was a world of horse drawn carts and dusty country roads.

But it was a world that he no longer belonged to, for his older brother had stole it all away from him when their father had died suddenly of a heart attack, while the younger of his two sons had been off bravely fighting for God and country. My great grandfather had tried to argue sense into his eldest son, but he would not have any of it. The father had a young, prodigal son ... his eldest wanted it all.

With a peace earned, hearing the news of the death of his father, my young grandfather set his sights for home, bringing with him two French friends, whom he had fought alongside, on that long train ride south from Warsaw to Krakow. The two Frenchmen had hoped to winter over in Poland before returning to Paris in the spring time. It was the last week of December when they arrived at the small farm and they were farther from home than my grandfather was. But my grandfather knew he owed these two for their magnanimity.

But my grandfather had returned home unannounced and unwelcomed. While the Frenchmen could barely understand the cruel words ... they could understand the harsh drama unleashed by the eldest on his young brother.

Une petite bien ...that came out of the 'Great Battle' is that a young Polish man would toil and fight beside some wanderlust Frenchmen who thought so much of him, his loyalty and his bravery that after that conflict was over, and the guns had gone silent, and after the harsh drama of the unwelcomed Christmas of 1922 they would invite my grandfather to come with them to Paris.

They taught him some French. They dressed him in a French Uniform, they gave him some papers ... off the body of one of their kinsmen ... and then smuggled him across Europe to Paris in a train of returning French soldiers.

And in Paris he would stay for the rest of his life. In Paris of the 1920's he found love, became a husband and then a father and when duty called him a second time, in 1939, he again put on a French uniform, this time at the invitation of his new home *La Republique Française*. He fought valiantly a second time and died defending the honor of both Poland and Paris.

Yet, it was only recently that I finally really got to know my grandfather ... for the great catastrophe of our day, that invisible one that could well become the 'Great Battle' of our day ... forced me to close the modest apartment in Paris that my family have lived in since the 1900's, and put dust covers on all the furniture, with the hope that I may once again return,

when life perhaps returns to normal. I had lost my job and could not pay the bank what I owe from my business loans and so they put a paper against my house. I had until the end of March to pay up or vacate.

It was on the last afternoon of that month when we were moving the great brass bed I sleep on, a 19th century family heirloom that was where my grandmother was born, where my mother was born and even where I was born too (such traditions are familial) that I finally got to know my grandfather.

I was born three decades after he had bravely lost his life to the screams of the stukas and the massacre of the bombs that rained out of the sky. Yet I know him better now than any time in the past.

As the movers were lifting the heavy head stand of my brass bed it tipped over and off popped the top ornament. To my great surprise inside the hollowness of the bed were secreted an old silk stocking wrapping a packet of old love letters and of jewelry that my grandmother had kept well hidden.

My grandmother is also long since gone and so as I sat there and read the letters. As I admired and counted the diamonds and pearls I remembered how she would tell me that they had been well to do in the 1930's and that I, her granddaughter, would never have to worry, as she had later had to do, as long as I slept in this great brass bed.

The top ornament had a cross on it and I assumed that it was the cross that would provide for my safety and wellbeing. But now I understood. That afternoon I phoned the bank and told them to go to the devil ... I would take my business elsewhere.

That night as I sat on my balcony reading the letters by candle light, I looked up and for the first time in my five decades of life ... I saw stars in the night sky over Paris.

On Visiting Vancouver a Second Time by Aki Kurosawa

[Tokyo] About ten years ago, in 2010, I visited Vancouver with my parents to come watch the Winter Olympics. This was the first time I had travelled outside of Japan. I was twelve. Before visiting Vancouver for the first time all the previous trips I took were to visit family and friend in different prefectures around Japan.

Four years ago I revisited Vancouver a second time, this time by myself. Well, actually not by myself ... but without my parents. I had graduated high-school but not started university and came for a two month visit to improve my English. I, along with six other Japanese women who were my friends, or friends of my friends, together decided to take a “learning-holiday” to Vancouver. We had all enrolled at the same language day school in downtown Vancouver, and were staying with different host families. One of us worked for JAL and was able to arrange affordable air fares for us all.

Of the seven of us, I was the only one who had visited Vancouver before and although I was not the oldest in the group (she was five years older than anyone else), I was chosen into the role of ‘big sister’ to the group. It turns out I spoke English the best of the group. You may have noticed that Japanese boys are very independent, while Japanese girls find their safety and comfort in groups.

In Japan we all study a second language in high school. Most decide to study English as a second language, some a European language like French, German or Italian, and some decide to learn Mandarin or Korean. My father is a petroleum trader for the Japanese Government who travels throughout the world. He is sometimes away for months. He has encouraged me and my younger sister to learn more than just two languages and so we have been learning several languages. I chose English and French – which I understand are the two official languages of Canada.

My youngest sister, just to be different, is learning both German and Russian. She dreams of one day taking a boat from Japan to Vladivostok and then the trans-Siberian railroad to St. Petersburg, and then onto Berlin. She is artistic and the avant garde one in our family, and is constantly rebellious. Perhaps it is because she is the youngest, or perhaps it was her love of the Pasternak film *Dr. Zhivago*? She hangs out with a Russian girl her age, Laura, who is a bit of a feline ... and who comes from Vladivostok. Her father teaches at university. Her mother stayed home in Russia. Laura comes to visit Japan when she is not at school.

The rest of the family are still trying to figure out why my younger sister wants to learn German? I think it is because she has heard that Berlin is a wild city ... which she wants to one day visit ...

My sister wanted to come with me to Vancouver to study English, but my parents decided against this. It wasn't merely because she is still in high-school it is also because she gets into trouble all the time. It was also

because of her cat like character ... she is very much a creature of the night ... constantly on the prowl for the life pleasures. Rumor has it that last year she appeared in a film of the night life of Tokyo that is ... not meant for our parents to see.

The fact that my younger sister is a rebel has been a secret incentive on me to be defiant too, but in my own secret way. It being my first trip alone ... my second trip to Vancouver might perhaps gave me the first freedom to be rebellious.

The oldest of our group of seven had just broken up with her long time boy friend. They had first met in high school and had been seeing each other for ten years. He was the only boy she had really gotten to know. They had broken up when she found out he was being unfaithful to her. They were a few months away from being married when she had broken their engagement. He ran off with the other girl, a teenager who was the very young sister of one of his 'old school friends.'

Her boy friend was ... a sponge off of her and so she was glad to be rid of him. He had no job ... did not want to go to university ... and didn't care that he still lived at home and spent all his free time playing video games. He is what we in Japan call Otaku.

She was the one who had a job with Japan Airlines and had arranged the special air fares for us. She was also who suggested the seven of us come for a learning-holiday in Vancouver. She came to Vancouver because she

needed a change of scenery. When she came she was sad ... and when she left she was happy again ... but in a very different way.

In actual fact the seven of us were very different from each other. The oldest of us was tall and slim, the youngest short and chubby and by chance the rest of us fit into a line of different hair styles, different clothes and different lifestyles, somewhere in between. Some of us were morning types and some night types. I was sort of in the middle. When we went out together I imagine that a perfect stranger would look at us and think that the only three things we had in common were that we were young, Japanese and women. But one man called us all girls!

I had to ask a Canadian friend what is the linguistic difference between being called a girl and being considered a women. He smiled and asked me, “Would you like an official definition or a colloquial one?”

Being curious I asked him for both.

“Officially,” he said, “a girl is a female who has yet to reach puberty ... and a women is one who now is fully herself ...” I sort of understood. “And the unofficial one?” I asked.

“Well “ he smiled, “ I don’t know you that well .. and I don’t want to shock you.” This only made me more curious and so I said “please tell me!”

“Here on the streets of Vancouver the definition of a girl and a woman is that they have had very different life experiences.” I still did not understand him and so I frowned. He shrugged his shoulders “a girl is a virgin, and a woman is not ...”

“Is that the same difference between a boy and a man?” I immediately asked him.

“You tell me ,,,” he smiled. “I doubt any of you are girls.” I blushed when he said this. We changed the subject.

I would later find out that when we arrived in Vancouver two of the seven of us were in fact just that ... but none were by the time we had left for home. It’s not what you think though, for we have two expressions in Japan that a “coin has two sides ...” and “a coin is easily flipped.”

A week after we arrived the youngest of us, the chubby one, had her hair cut short and for most of her time in Vancouver dressed like a boy.

The other one found herself a ‘boy friend” and is now married to him and lives in Vancouver. He is one of the language instructors we had. She didn’t fly home with us at the end of our “learning-holiday.” She had come to Vancouver to stay. As I write this they are expecting a baby.

Our visits to Vancouver changed each of us, but in different ways. We were all happy to be in a smaller city with less people crowding around us.

Vancouver might be a big city in Canada but it hardly compares to a small city on Japan. We were all happy to be distinct, instead of lost in a crowd of other black haired and black eyed Japanese, and well there is something about being a Japanese ‘girl’ in the eyes of Canadian men that makes it easy for us to make new friends.

The seven of us had a different definition of what ‘being friends’ meant. The youngest of us had a friend who ... well ... was very different than all the others we met. Her friend was intense and quick to judge. We found it hard to be around her. The youngest didn’t mind for she was very submissive, more so than a Japanese woman normally is. And the play they got into was ‘very rough and tumble.’ But that is what she wanted.

About half-way through our stay in Vancouver she asked me to come with her to a ‘special event’ she had been invited to in Burnaby on a Saturday night at a place called “the dungeon.” The only reason I agreed to go was that all the others had turned her down and I was the last one she had to ask. Even though I wanted to, I could not say no. She being the youngest I felt an obligation to protect her. But in retrospect I am not sure she wanted to be ... protected.

I had heard that such places existed but never imagined I would ever find myself in one of them. There were three of us when we arrived, the youngest one, her ‘girlfriend’ and me as a chaperone of sorts. But after only a few minutes inside the dark and evil place, the two of them disappeared and I had to leave! It was something out of a cheap horror film. Why people

would chose to allow themselves to be humiliated like this I will never know! She arrived several hours late at school on Monday wearing long socks and wrist bands to hide her ‘rough and tumble’. Neither of us talked about her ‘Saturday night.’ We sort of drifted apart after that. She also stopped going to language school the middle of that week. She moved out from her home stay and in with her ‘girlfriend.’ That was the last we heard of her

I told my Canadian friend about this and he said it was her “Satyr-day night.” At first I did not understand what he meant, but he spelled it out for me. I asked him whether he had ever been at a place like this. He said no ... but in such a way that I felt I had to ask him “would you ever go to such a place?”

“It depends ...

“On what ?”

“I guess ... if I was going to watch or going to be watched”

I found his answer so unexpected. So I asked him what he meant. He suggested I ask my friend and so right then and there I called her up and spoke to her. When I asked her why ... I got a response I had not expected. “So desu!”

My Canadian friend does not speak Japanese but he recognized my exclamation and so after I got off the phone he asked and I told him. “She had gone not to watch ... but to be watched!”

“Are you surprised?” was what he asked before he raised his hand up to say stop! “Let’s talk about something else ...”. I wanted to talk with him about this but decided to wait another time.

The other four of us came to visit Vancouver for different reasons. One enjoyed hiking and quickly took to visiting the different parks in Vancouver and on the North Shore of Vancouver. On the weekdays she would all but disappear and then reappear in a very blissful state on Monday morning in our language school classes. In the space of a few weeks she had a lovely tan and many stories to share with us. At the last evening together she screened a compilation of different short films she had made of her hikes around Vancouver. I must admit then and there I regretted not tagging along on some of her hikes.

Three were in Vancouver to learn English. Two of my friends visited the UBC and SFU with the hope of going to university in Vancouver. One just enjoyed travelling and had been to Paris and Florence but had never been to Canada. She had heard very interesting stories about Vancouver and spent most of her free time exploring the city and enjoying the beach life. She had a date for every night of the week. She told us that her main goal in life was to enjoy herself “before it was too late.” The rest of us had our own ideas as

to what she meant by “before it was too late.” I could not see her settling down and getting married ...

There was one hike all seven of us took together and that was to see part of Stanley Park. This was where I met my Canadian friend for the first time. He had offered to take one of us for a visit (they had both met at a Saturday afternoon conversation club that gathered at a café on Granville Street near the waterfront station) and well ... since Japanese women always travel together, the other six of us showed up. We met him at the bus loop near the rose garden in Stanley Park. When he arrived he was amused to see six of us waiting for him and all of us waiting for the last one of us to join the group outing. She was not a morning person and we had made arrangements to meet at 10 and she was late as usual. When she arrived twenty minutes late she had not even had breakfast and so we had to dig in our bags to find her something to eat. Then we all set out to explore Stanley Park. We visited the aquarium and then walked back to the Rose garden and then past Lost Lagoon. We set off to English Bay and when we got there it was time to sit and rest.

I wanted to talk with him and so I sat next to my new Canadian friend.

He was both polite and charming and I instantly began to like him. I asked him why he wanted to take us on a tour of Stanley Park. “I am in paradise ... me and seven beautiful women!” We walked along the sea wall towards Kitsilano but decide to turn back because it was now 2 in the afternoon and there were things some of my friends had to do that afternoon.

As we walked back down Denman Street he treated us to ice cream. “It doesn’t cost me a cent,” he said. “I am an author and the ice cream is paid for out of my book royalty fund.” I noticed though that he didn’t order himself any ice cream. When I asked him why he joked and said “I am a growing boy ... but I am growing sideways.” We were all very happy, even the chubby one. But then again she had a triple scoop! Just before we went our separate ways on Georgia and Denman, and when no one was watching I gave him my email, and he gave me his.

After waiting a few days and not hearing from him I emailed him and the following Saturday, instead of going to the conversation club meeting he and I walked down Robson and then sat for coffee at a place that make wonderful poppy cake, which he suggested I try. Then we talked. Well ... I talked and he mostly listened. Most men like to talk about themselves but ... he just listened.

I asked him why he goes to the conversation club and he said it was to listen to stories. He like to write short stories and by listening to other people share their life experiences it gave him ideas for stories. I asked him if I had given him ideas and he smiled and said, enigmatically, “yes you have given me ideas ...”

“What kind?” I asked him.

“Romantic ones ...” He lowered his eyes and his voice as he said this. I sensed his shyness and his sincerity so I reached across the table and put my hand on his. It felt warm ... or it might have been my hand that was warm.

I felt wet between my legs. That had never really happen to me before. I had not come to Vancouver to fall in love ... but sometimes love is inevitable.

In Tokyo, back home, I had several friends who were ... well ... boyfriends of sorts but not any that I felt all that close to. I knew most of them from high school. It is expected that an eligible Japanese women would date. It is expected that Japanese women would chose to either be a career woman or a wife. It was not expected that a Japanese woman would fall in love with a man half way around the world. I had to hide my feelings. But I found that very hard to do. I wasn't a girl any more!

For the rest of my visit to Vancouver I tried to find an excuse to see him at least twice a week and he sort of understood my feelings, but he was careful not to take advantage of me. He told me that as a Catholic he knew the difference between love and lust. He had once been married and I asked and he said he had no children of his own. There was a very sincere sadness in his eyes as he said this. “Things didn't work out.”

It was the evening before I returned home we went for dinner and afterwards, as he walked me to my bus, I finally had the courage to ask him about his comment “are you surprised ... she wanted to be watched?”

He turned to me and whispered “In an empty life ... we all want to be noticed ...”

I kissed him on the cheek and did not turn back as I stepped onto the bus. I did not want him to see my tears.

Falling in Love with a Beast by Emily Mathews

[**Vancouver**] Why does Beauty fall in love with the Beast? Why does the well bred, well mannered lady fall in love with the mysterious and social outcast? He is the object of fear within the community and yet Beauty still falls in love with his beastly form. This inexplicable idea has taken allegorical form, evolved into myth, and has become a common motif that we see in modern fairy tales and storytelling today.

The evolution of the Beauty and the Beast motif results in a development of the original archetypal characters. In C. S. Lewis's novel *Till We Have Faces* he develops the concept that in myth human sympathy is at a minimum. All the characters are like shapes moving in another world. Meyer, in his discussion of *Till We Have Faces*, argues that even though Lewis titles the novel as a retelling of the myth, it is in fact not. Lewis' own characterization of myth works against it "since the psychology of the characters is a major interest." (Meyer 184). Likewise, in modern retellings of Beauty and the Beast, the mythic tale has changed to adopt to the fairy tale genre. It is no longer myth but a fairy tale. Despite the fundamental differences however, the fairy tale could not exist without the original mythic elements.

The Development of the Myth: The Tale of Cupid and Psyche

The predominant, earliest written example of the Beauty and the Beast tale is Apuleius' allegorical *Metamorphoses* (Accardo 53). The tale is of a

beautiful mortal girl, whose beauty is so exulted that the goddess Venus becomes jealous. As punishment Psyche is sent to marry a monstrous beast “[not] sprung from a bloodline is humans – Only a fell, snake-like beast, wild, sadistic, and cruel.” (trans. Relihan 10). Psyche bravely faces her fate but upon seeing her beauty Cupid (who was to escort her to her doom) defies her mother’s wishes and decides to take and marry her herself. By day Psyche is served by invisible servants and by night her husband, who remains faceless and nameless, enters her bed chambers. One day, after begging to see her sisters, they jealously convince Psyche to look upon the face of her husband, despite his admonitions not to. Psyche does so and as she is looking upon the face his inhumanly handsome face, oil from her lamp splashes onto his shoulder and wakes him. Cupid leaves Psyche and in despair she attempts to drown herself in a river, but the river will not allow her. Venus finds out about Psyche and attempts to kill her by setting three impossible tasks. If she succeeds then she will be with Cupid again. With help she is successful in all except the final task. Upon returning from the underworld with Persephone’s beauty in a box, Psyche’s curiosity gets the better of her and she opens it despite specific instructions not to. She falls unconscious and it is only through Cupid’s pleas to Juno (Zeus) that Psyche is brought back to life and is made immortal (sum. Relihan).

It has been suggested by Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton that Apuleius got his ideas from early Hindu stories, however there is little to no evidence of that (Accardo 53). However, if this was true it would support the idea that certain basic archetypes appear repeatedly within certain motifs. These

characters encompass basic archetypes that are the basis for later fairy tale characters. In the following passage Pasquale Accardo suggests that:

“What is just as often ignored is the extent to which the themes that recur throughout Apuleius’ novel prefigure almost all the major fairy-tale themes: the simpleton who succeeds, the youngest child who surpasses the older siblings, the evil witch/stepmother (Venus), the king elves, helpful animals, insects and birds, cannibalistic ogre (Cupid, the dragon/serpent), terrifying beasts, the clumsy, stupid giant (Lucius as an ass), tales that provide unending feasts, invisibility, captivating music, magical transformations, shrews that need to be tamed, seven-league boots (rapid travel), and enchanted swords and clubs to vanquish any opposing powers. The literary Apuleius might be considered the father of the entire fairy-tale genre.” (Accardo 48).

Thus, Accardo *argues* that the basic characteristics of Cupid and Psyche transcends generations, appearing in ever popular tales such as Beauty and the Beast, East of the Sun and West of the Moon and King Kong. Psyche’s royal family can be applied perfectly within the modern world, and isn’t that the defining element of the archetype? You’ll never see the embodiment of an archetype, but you will see the recurring symbol of one. Jung used the terms “motifs” and “primordial images” to stand for “archetypes,” saying that “the archetype is a tendency to form such a representations of a motif – representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. There are, for instance, many representations of the motif of the hostile brethren, but the motif remains the same.” (qtd. Snider 4,5).

The role of the wicked stepmother that has become the staple in fairy tales makes her first appearance in *Metamorphoses* in the form of Venus. She enlists her son Cupid to destroy Psyche, her rival in beauty. Venus' antagonism towards Psyche incites Cupid's clandestine marriage to Psyche, resulting in Venus' jealousy of Psyche. His mother then turns him into an unseen presence that impels Psyche to believe that her husband is a monstrous beast. The idea is encouraged by her jealous sisters who envy Psyche's God-husband and beautiful palace. These archetypal characters are manifested repeatedly until the wicked step-mother and sisters become the typical fairy tale antagonists.

Looking at Stith Thompson's book on studying folktales, he examines Wilhelm Grimm's explorations into how these resemblances and identical plots can be explained within myth and fairy tales.

“[Myth's] significance has long been lost, but it is still felt and imparts values to the story, while satisfying the natural pleasure in the wonderful ... as gentler and more human manners develop themselves and the sensuous richness of fiction increases, the mythical element retires into the background and begins to shroud itself in the mists of distance, which weaken the distinctness of the outlines but enhance the charms of the fiction.” (qtd. Thompson 370)

This suggests that all folktales are broken down myths. Thompson later goes on to create a classification index that lists all the various 'types' of

folktales and myths, thus allowing for “recognition of these resemblances ... [that] brings scholar[s] closer to an understanding of human culture.” (Thompson 6). The tale of Beauty and the Beast is a ‘type’ of myth that recurs. It suggests that there is a common theme of taming ‘bestial’ love of ‘savage’ love throughout many cultures.

Beyond the Archetypes: Till We Have Faces

C. S. Lewis’ novel *Till We Have Faces* does not aim to create a fairy tale. Rather in his novel we see Lewis fleshing out and developing the original myth from the point of view of Psyche’s sister. Lewis states that “nothing was further from my aim tna to recapture the peculiar quality of the *Metamorphoses* – that strange compound of picaresque novel, horror, comic, mystagogue’s [sic] tract, pornography, and stylistic experiment.” (Lewis 313) Lewis’ narrative differs from myth in that the psychology of the characters plays a major role. For example, the royal family in Lewis’ version would fit perfectly in the modern day: “Redival, the rebellious, slightly slutty daughter; Psyche, the saintly one; Orual, the misfit; and Trom, the abusive father.” (Meyers 184). In addition, myths always deal with the fantastical. Lewis changes these unexplainable occurrences so that they inhabit dreams and visions.

C. S. Lewis’ novel *Till We Have Faces* is the same myth but retold from the point of view of one of the sisters. What makes it different from Apuleius’ version is instead of a fairy tale-like setting, *Till We Have Faces* is specifically set in a country called Glome that are ruled by kings who have

names and faces. This brings a sense of realism; the reader is under the illusion that the narrator is in real place and time bringing us into a literary world.

The most important deviation from Apuleius's version is that Lewis makes Psyche's palace invisible to her sister's eyes. Orual cannot see it because at first it "seems that Orual is too hardheaded, too much of a realist, too scientifically objective, to enter into Psyche's fantasy." Orual chooses what "data [she] will pay attention to, and which she will ignore." (Myers 64) In the myth there is the assumption that fantastical things are everyday commonplace occurrences. Lewis' character Orual denies these magical reasoning and explanations. Her vehement refusal of Psyche's offer to get her husband to enable Orual to see the invisible castle: "I don't want it. I hate it. Hate it, hate it" is evidence of her closed mind (Lewis 124). This is quite unlike myths where magical explanations are accepted and are seen as rational.

Apuleius reveals a myth that enlightens us with stories that bear no realism and are told from an omniscient point of view. This distances the audience from the characters. In contrast, Lewis tells us his tale from a first person narrative. From Apuleius' omniscient point of view the reader is able to observe everything within the worlds of the Gods and the mortals. The reader is present in every scene and we are able to follow Psyche through her trials and tribulations. We are privy to thoughts and deeds, and the political, self-centered squabbling that the Gods take part in. In *Till We Have Faces* the reader is exposed to only a biased perspective, limited to

only what Orual knows. The private lives of the Gods remain just that, private. We don't get an insider look into the marriage of Psyche and Cupid, only glimpses. This allows us for a more realistic viewpoint and "certainly more modern, for twentieth-century authors play on our awareness that knowledge is partial and witnesses often unreliable." (Myers 150) We are immersed in a world of empirical fact; everything that a myth encompasses (magic, gods, miracles) may exist but is not touched upon in Lewis' novel. Instead, Lewis attempts to reconcile myth with "real things" which explains the tension between reason and imagination throughout the book. (Schakel 111)

The Development of the Romantic Fairy Tale: Beauty and the Beast

The type of comic romance to which 'Psyche and Cupid' belongs is a compilation of translated stories that are now known only through later retelling. "The connection of old women's speech and the consolatory, erotic, often fanciful fable appears deeply intertwined in language itself, and with women's speaking roles, as the etymology of 'fairy' illuminates." (Warner 14). Thus, the concept of the 'fairy tale' emerges through recycled and evolving retellings.

Beauty and the Beast has manifested from Apuleius' version to encompass the woman's voyage of inner discovery. "The demotion of the god who takes on human form and is imagined to be a beast, to a real beast who is an enchanted human being, has retained intact the successful form of the original story that has significantly diluted its deeper meaning" which is

“[the] loving encounter between persons whose natures, whose level of being, are fundamentally different (Accardo 86). Simple put – Beauty is a human girl and the Beast is an animal, yet they learn to love one another. This manifestation of man to Beast can be seen in the emergence of Madame Leprince de Beaumont’s famous rendition of *Beauty and the Beast* written during the mid-eighteenth century.” (Warner 297)

The fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* deviates from both Apuleius’ myth and Lewis’ novel in that Psyche’s lover is *not* a beast. He is only concealed from her. She is actually wrong to fear him. In many ways “the inner structure of the Beauty and the Beast tale reverses the roles defined by the title – she has to learn the higher (human) wisdom of seeing past outward appearances, to grasp that monstrosity lies in the eye of the beholder, while the beast turns out to be irresistibly beautiful and the highest good.” (Warner 275) The myth of Cupid and Psyche has a deeper meaning lying under the simple story: “The name [Psyche] invites such a response, of course. Psyche is the Greek word for “soul”; the story from the first has been allegorized as the human soul’s quest for love.” (Schakel 5) The fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* on the other hand is *not* allegorical and instead focuses on the female audience of the time.

“Romance – love in marriage – was an elusive ideal, which the writer of the *contes* sometimes set up in defiance of destiny ... The fairy tale of *Beauty and the Beast* assumed a female audience on the whole who fully expected to be given away by their fathers to men who might well strike them as monsters. The social revolution which has established both romantic and

companionate marriage as the norm irreversibly altered the reception of such romances, and ironically transformed certain women's examination of their matrimonial lot into materialistic propaganda for making a good marriage. (Warner 278)

Further, Cocteau's film *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) concentrates on awakening Beauty to the goodness of the Beast; "she has to see his unsightliness to the gentle and loving human being trapped inside." (*La Belle et la Bête*, Warner 295). The beast's anthropomorphic shape in the film, half man and half human, intensify the Beast's pitiful dilemma: his male desires deserve the reciprocating love a woman who would see past their eyes and listen to their heart. The film concentrates on "men's anguish in the face of female indifference, on the tenderness of masculine desire and the cruelty of the female response, rather than women's vulnerability to male violence." (ibid, 296). The mysterious femininity of the enchanted castle serves as the counterpart to the Beast's savage masculinity. Without its feminine counterpart, the Beast cannot survive. Interestingly, at the end of the movie, when the Beast is turned back into a man his human face is the same as the former rejected, aspiring lover Avenant. "So *La Belle et la Bête* traces a promise to male lovers that they will not always be rejected, that human lovers, however profligate, can be saved," (ibid. 297). Mme. Beaumont's telling of Beauty and the Beast (of which *La Belle et la Bête* is based) has inspired the idea of female love and sympathy saving the man from the beast inside of him. To this day it continues to inspire; however, I suggest that because historical context changes with time, so much must the tale change.

Alternatively, Betsy Hearne states, “the conditions determining the fate of Psyche and Beauty are totally different: Beauty’s is a test of the perception of the heart and mind, while Psyche, repeatedly characterized as simple of mind, is tested to blind obedience ...” (Hearne 11). In Jessica Tiffin’s book *Marvelous Geometry*, she goes into length of the interchangeability and a lack thereof of myth and fairy tale. She touches on Max Lüthi’s work and his formalist theory of ‘*isolation*’ in which fairy tale figures are separated from any background or context. “Their psychological processes are not illuminated: only their line of progress is in focus, only that which is relevant to the action,” says Lüthi (qtd. Tiffin 15). Ursula Le Guin furthers this idea in her discussion of Jungian archetype in fantasy. She argues that, “in fairy tale ... there is no ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ there is a different standard, which is perhaps best called ‘appropriateness’ ... Under the conditions of fairy tale, in the language of archetypes, we can say with perfect conviction that it may be *appropriate* to [push an old lady into an oven].” She is suggesting why fairy tales (or we should say certain mythic motifs) survive over time and throughout a wide range of cultures.

That said, at the same time fairy tales are difficult to read symbolically because it is not an allegory. It *derives* from the allegory. The motifs, rather than meaning something specific, have resonance with the reader. Ursula Le Guin puts this another way: “a symbol is not a sign of something known, but an indicator of something not known and not expressible other than symbolically. [Students] mistake symbol (living meaning) with allegory (dead meanin)” (qtd. From Tiffin). There may be allegory inside the fairy

tale, but as Gay Clifford puts it, “the allegorist wants to communicate certain generalized formulations about the nature of the human experience ... and shapes his narrative so as to reveal these.” (qtd. From Tiffin 16)

In review, the tale of the Beauty and the Beast has had specific significance throughout the ages. In mythological form it is a tale of the soul’s quest for love. As we progress in time there is a search for deeper, psychological meaning within the myth. C. S. Lewis attempts this in his novel *Till We Have Faces*. In large part he succeeds as we get an insider’s look into the why and how of the original myth. However, we miss out the omniscient point of view that the original myth provides. Lastly, there are the fairy tales that derive from the myths and allegories. Fairy tales constantly adapt to the historical context around them. They take the bits and pieces from the original myth in order to make a familiar tale that will resonant with current audiences. An interesting study and/or observation would be to look at a pocketbook and modern romance (e.g. Harlequin Romances, Silhouette Romances, popular suspense novels, etc.). The bad boy who’s in touch with his ‘inner beast’ is a constant attraction to females who believe they can ‘tame’ him. Could this be a modern rendition of Beauty and the Beast” It could be ...

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Such is Dedication by William Webster

[**New York**] New York is full of neurotic unmarried Jewish girls who want to be fêted but don't want to be bedded – “I am saving myself for marriage.” They don't like to stay home all the time to the incessant whining of their mothers – “why aren't you married ... yet?” So they go out, from time to time, and well, they like to be indulged, but they don't always reciprocate.

The idiom ‘*princesses*’ comes to mind. It's more than just pure semantics. And the *princesses* come in many an assemblage – Czarina's if they are of Russian heritage, Gypsies if they are of Hungarian, a Countess if they come from Poland or there about ... And there are as many ... as there are days in a month, or phases of the moon.

“I am saving myself for marriage ...” Now not even Catholic girls are as dedicated to such vestal devotion ... but there is a twist. The moment they see their boy is circumcised, well things change. Frankly I don't know this from personal experience, but after a long and uneventful affair of some weeks with a gypsy, I once asked her about this and well what ensued was adulterated *ignoratio elenchi* at its finest. If you don't know the term ... look it up, I won't explain it to you.

‘It is one thing to put out with a boy ... but it's another thing to put out for a goy ‘

The first time we went out the gypsy was bedecked in gold earrings, and gold necklaces, had perfectly set makeup on and expensive French perfume, and wore an outfit that was provocative to say the least, as almost as if she was advertizing ‘her wares.’ Buxom and a broad in the truest sense of the word, *sans habillement* I could imagine her as rolly-polly, and as furry as any Babylonian babe (one of my Jewish pals introduced me to the phrase).

Did I say her dress ended faraway north of her Nile ... but not so afar south of her Alexandria?

First we ate like a queen and her jester at an upscale, up town restaurant, then as dessert was being served her (I needed a coffee to keep awake) next came the twenty questions ... if you have ever dated a Jewish gyrl in New York (I admit gyrl is meant to evoke an animalistic response from you) – then you know about the twenty questions. They are carefully crafted queries meant to find out whether you are wealthy ... or naught ... whether you will be able to look out for her in the manner she is accustomed to, and whether you are goy– in that order. Oh, and the dinner was her test, too. The gypsy chose all the expensive items on the menu, including the wine.

She approached it as if it were a *mysterium tremendum* ...

“Yes, I am a well to do professional.” I usually don’t get much past question number three ... ‘do you go to synagogue?’ I don’t know what the rest of the questions are about but I can imagine. Maybe some are sensible and some rabbinical ... If you know what they are, help me out here!

My answer to the gypsy was “If I sin ... I don’t go to synagogue ... do you?
I prefer confession at the Catholic Cathedral ...”

Oh, I confess my rejoinder about *sin and the synagogue* is meant to be edgy ... but it is my way to ask the gyrl what she really wants from me ... now that she knows I am not circumcised.

There was a brief flicker in her eye – but I could not at the time resolve whether it was amusement or relief. Whatever it was, as we parted company and she fell into her cab she said with a smirk “let’s meet up again sometime” Her subtle message was delivered in plain language when she bent forward out of the back seat and presented her bosom, ending her invitation with “ ... soon.” There was no thought of sharing a taxi, especially a back seat ...

It sped away before she could ask for the fare.

You can’t have it all ... baby.

I walked home. It was a nice night and the sights were grand. The street corners were busy that night with other gypsies advertizing their wares ... waiting to be picked up and served up for dinner and dessert.

The next time she and I went out was a few weeks later on a Wednesday night. She wore no gold, very little makeup and a dress that went almost to between her knees and ankles.

I had suggested we go uptown “to ... catch a film.” “Sure let’s catch a film ... but later ... first I am hungry!” Sigh ...

She wanted to be taken to a neighborhood delicatessen a few blocks not all that far from where she lived. She wanted coffee and strudel and a few other sweet indulgences. When we got there it was obvious to me that the gypsy also wanted to flirt with the Hungarian boy behind the counter.

So I sat there, sipped my coffee and did a little people watching. I wasn’t going to let her push my buttons. It was a family business and it had its usuals. The boy behind the counter knew all his customers by sight and could gather their preferences without asking. It was a mute and mutable affair.

I smiled at her as she ate, head down. So this was her world, the familiar, the homely. So much for being exotic! A film didn’t feel all that interesting any more. The strudel crunched in her mouth. Crumbs fell on her dress.

There are really only two times an eligible gyrl wants to be out with an ineligible goy. Those two times are a half-month apart. Two weeks back she wore a short dress ... and now she wore a long one. It was as plain to me as white roses ... and red ones ...

She flashed a smirk as the young man behind the counter told his boss “he was off to the movies and would be back at eleven”. Her eyes were down as she watched his footsteps walk past out table. The pale blue and grey linoleum was well traveled. It had once been white and dark blue. Age!

The gypsy thought I hadn’t noticed the tell ... her brief smirk. She quickly finished her strudel and coffee and then grabbed my arm to say “we might still catch the early show ...” and all but lifted me out of my seat.

She dragged me to a run down theater around the corner. I knew of it but never went there because ... well it had a reputation ... and rarely showed first run films. I looked up at the marquis, a half dozen bulbs burnt out, and smiled. “Blade Runner ... a science fiction classic!” So much for going uptown.

I caught a glimpse of him as he was just entering the theater. We lined up to buy our tickets. It was an old movie theater that even in the 1950’s had seen its better days with King Kong and Flash Gordon. She marched us quickly through the lobby that smelled of old popcorn and industrial disinfectant, through the one and only set of doors and down to some seats near the middle of the half filled theater just as the lights were dimming. She all but pushed me into a row and sat one over from the aisle. Her madness had method ...

The previews were hardly over when she leaned over and whispered into my ear “I have to ... go”. Since leaving the delicatessen, in the space of a mere ten minutes the gypsy had become so insignificant to me that I did not even care to look up at her as she disappeared into the flickering glow of the beginnings of the feature film. It was a second run of a film I had already seen and so I sort of settled deep into the sag of my seat and waited for the second act of her drama to begin.

Less than five minutes something rather astonishing happened. Another girl, a perfect stranger, sat down next to me. Out of the corner of my eye I spied her. She must have been perhaps in her late teens. She just plunked herself in the seat next to me and proceeded to eat her box of popcorn. She was a *Godling* ...

For several minutes, I did not say anything, and neither did she, until she offered me some popcorn. Not knowing what to say or do I offered her my up-turned palm and she poured some of the hot, buttered popcorn into my hand. She wore a simple dress, no make-up and jewelry. It was hard to tell the colour of her hair or eyes in the darkness of the theater.

We just sat there watching the film and eating popcorn together. After another few minutes it became obvious to me that the gypsy would not be coming back. It was then that I realized she had gone to join her matzo somewhere in the back of the theater. I had images of her an insect playing with his haustellum ...

After a few second I summoned up enough curiosity to lean over and whisper into the young girl's ear "who are you?"

"My brother does this to me all the time. He invites me to come to see a film with him and then gives me five bucks to leave him ... for one of his girlfriends ..."

"Oh ..." I said this in a neutral way because I really wasn't surprised at what the gypsy had done. What was surprising was what the girl did next.

First she undid the top two buttons of her dress and opened it just enough for me to see the softness of her tiny breast. Then she set the half-empty box of popcorn onto the seat next to her. Next she leaned over and whispered into my ear. "I have had enough with my brother and his games."

"Let's sneak out of here." Her eyes were sparkling as she said, "I don't care whether you are a goy ... I only care you are a boy ...". She took my hand. Her hand was very soft and warm. We waited until a dark thread in the film and ducked out the emergency exit at the front of the theater. I doubt we were missed.

Later that evening we stopped into the delicatessen for a late night strudel and coffee. She had quite an appetite. I settled for mineral water.

It was a school night and well-past midnight but the countess and I both just had to gloat, under the irate eye of her brother, who was busy slicing meat.

After she was finished I gave her my number, paid the bill and took my leisurely stroll home.

She called on me that Saturday afternoon. The countess and I had an understanding. She would not ask me the twenty questions and I would ... well ... indulge her.

Such is dedication!

A Blessed Question of Perspective by Patrick Bruskiewich

[**Vancouver**] This isn't a make believe story written about make believer love or touchy feely things. It isn't about flowers in the Caribbean, or about popular and corny things like Harry Potter (what I call popcorn). This is a real story, about real people, doing real things, that affect the lives of millions. So if you are expecting something uterine don't read on.

How we see the world is a question of perspective. Take for instance the matter of the ongoing feud between the United States and North Korea. What is the expression ... *they are like two ships that are passing each other in the night*? This is how I see the most recent interaction between American President Trump and North Korean President Kim. They want to make their rendezvous with destiny, however they seem to be sailing right past each other. Sure the two Presidents met last summer for lunch at a fancy resort in Singapore, and they even shook hands and signed the menu, but they can't seem to sail together in the same direction.

Earlier this year I publicly characterized the North Korean missile and nuclear arsenal as a *Joker* in Kim's hand of cards and not the *Ace* President Kim thought it would be. In the game of cards Kim is playing with Trump, it is only the *Aces* that count, not the *Jokers*. Technically both the US and North Korea are in a state of armistice, which is a war 'on pause'. Technically they are still at war, but it is a cold war and not a hot one. What Sir Winston Churchill once said how '*jaw jaw jaw is much better than war*,

war, war,’ comes to mind. Shots are still being traded from time to time between North and South Korea, but much of what goes on is talk, talk, talk.

As they sit playing their card game, the two Presidents are playing the end game to the longest state of war in modern times, the Korean Conflict. How will this end game of cards play out?

Unlike most people, I am not a mere bystander to this end game, I am one of the architects of the two United Nations Security Council Resolutions from 2006 and 2009 that set in place the Naval Quarantine of North Korea and related sanctions that arose because of North Korea’s decision to test detonate nuclear weapons. It is these two UN Security Council Resolutions that have taken us to this end game. I have helped to deal the cards and I know that *Jokers* don’t trump *Aces*. They never do. I have been keeping a close watch on this card game.

When I stood up recently and publicly stated the obvious, it seemed so apparent to me, but it did not seem so apparent to the men who were staring the fact in the face. What I stated was not obvious to the President of the United States, nor to the President of Russia, nor to the President of the People’s Republic of China. The obvious fact was that the three superpowers have an outstanding, mutual agreement dating from 1951 that the nearly seven decade old Korean Conflict *is to be a non-nuclear conflict*.

When President Harry S. Truman fired General MacArthur in April 1951 it was not merely because of a fundamental disagreement over Korean war

policy, it was over the question of who set nuclear weapons policy in the United States: Was nuclear weapons policy set by the civilian or by the military authorities in the US Government? The statements and decisions made by President Harry S. Truman regarding Korea and nuclear weapons policy established a mutual understanding between Harry S. Truman, Mao Tse Tung and Josef Stalin that the Korean Conflict was to be a non-nuclear conflict. On the other side of the issue was MacArthur, who was making ready to escalate a regional conflict into a nuclear one.

During the past twenty years, as North Korean went about their nuclear weapons development, this obvious fact – that the Korean Conflict *is a non-nuclear conflict* – had been all but forgotten by the three Presidents. Recently I reminded the three Presidents in a public way – in one of my **Radio Free Vancouver** Broadcasts (available through archive.org) that this mutual agreement was good enough for Harry S. Truman, Mao Tse Tung and Josef Stalin, and who were they the modern day leaders of the United States, Russia and Mainland China to disagree? The fact that I am one of the architects of two United Nations Security Council Resolutions is one of the major reasons why these three heads of state paused, took note and acted.

A few days after my **Radio Free Vancouver** Broadcast (RFV # 51) on March 12th, 2018 President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China summoned President Kim of North Korea to Beijing for a one day summit on March 28th, 2018 and directed North Korea to cease any further testing and development of their nuclear arsenal. The President of Russia indirectly also constructively engaged in this matter as well. You will note that there

have been no North Korean nuclear weapons tests in 2018. By the way my March 12th Radio Free Vancouver Broadcast and the resulting Beijing summit preceded the Singapore luncheon between Trump and Kim by two whole months.

In my spring 2018 Broadcasts I also suggested a way to end the conflict and sign a peace treaty, but we are getting ahead of ourselves in this story.

Before we look at contemporary events let us remind ourselves of the history of the Korean Conflict. We know much about this time in history because historians have studied and written about the years 1949 to 1954 in great detail. When war broke out on the Korean peninsula in 1950 Truman wanted the conflict to remain contained within the borders of the Korean Peninsula, and remain a conventional war, while General MacArthur wanted to expand the war north of the Yalu River (which divided North Korea from the People's Republic of China), and implicitly threatened the use of nuclear weapons.

By 1951 Truman, while frustrated by the quagmire that the conflict was becoming, knew not to escalate the Korean Conflict into a full-fledged confrontation between West and East. General MacArthur, who wanted to win the Korean Conflict at any cost, wanted to bomb air bases, troop and supply complexes north of the Yalu, intimating he might even use some of the handful of nuclear weapons he had wrangled out of the US nuclear inventory, behind the President's back. General MacArthur had moved five *Fatman* type atom bombs from the continental US and stored them for quick

dispatch at an air base in the Eastern Pacific. MacArthur also had a squadron of nuclear capable B-29 bombers at his disposal. Need I remind you that the conflict from 1950 to 1953 in Korea played out a decade before such safe guards as *Permissive Action Links* had been put into place by President John F. Kennedy to prevent unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

To make sure everyone understood who was in charge President Harry S. Truman first met with MacArthur at Wake Island to assert his authority as American President and when MacArthur continued to defy Presidential authority Harry S. Truman fired General MacArthur, taking a great deal of political flack in Washington for doing this, but preventing a regional conflict from escalating into a nuclear East-West confrontation. This high drama occurred at the beginning of what later became known as the nuclear arms race and the four decade long MAD era (Mutually Assured Destruction).

In the summer of 1949, just prior to the beginning of the Korea Conflict, the Soviet Union test detonated RDS-1, a copy of the *Fatman* implosion weapon dropped on Nagasaki in 1945. The Soviet's network of atomic spies had given Soviet scientists the entire blueprint not merely of the weapon itself, but the remarkable industrial complex needed to make the *Fatman* implosion weapon.

In a story that is still not full told some of the uranium used to produce the Plutonium-239 in RDS-1 came from uranium mines in North Korea. I have studied this matter in some detail. Ironically these uranium mines had been

surveyed and opened by the Imperial Japanese Government while they occupied Korea from 1910 to 1945. Much of the Imperial Japanese Governments efforts to develop nuclear weapons during the period 1942-1945 has been hidden or obfuscated away by the Japanese in a deliberate foreign policy program to mislead. If you want to get a fuller picture of this hidden history may I recommend *Japan's Secret War* by Robert Wilcox.

In true fact, from 1942 the Imperial Japanese Government had an active wartime nuclear weapons development program underway in North Korea, which came to a 'temporary end' with the Soviet invasion of North Korea in August, 1945, a few short days before the end of the Second World War. During the Second World War the Spaniards ran an atomic bomb spy ring for the Japanese and knew as early as 1942 that the allies were building an atomic bomb. This is why their weapon design work was moved to the secure location of Los Alamos, New Mexico in 1943.

Why do I describe it as a 'temporary end?' At the surrender of Imperial Japan the uranium mines and nuclear facilities were soon taken over by the North Koreans and their Soviet allies. At the end of the Second World War the largest hydroelectric, industrial and economic center on the Asian continent was the complex that the Imperial Japanese Government had built up while they occupied North Korea from 1910 to 1945. Since 1945 the Japanese have deliberately mislead the world by understating and hiding their wartime nuclear weapons program in North Korea. Now that North Korea has developed an inventory of perhaps a dozen nuclear weapons it is perhaps time to revisit the revisionism that the Japanese have become

renown for, in particular the work they did in North Korea between 1942 and 1945.

Let me now turn the clock forward by seven decades. Let me explain where I come in. I am a former naval officer with the Royal Canadian Navy. In the early 1980's I was the youngest naval officer in Canada and one of the youngest officers serving with a N.A.T.O navy. I served the RCN around the time the Falklands Island Conflict occurred in 1982. After an incident at sea that crushed my spine and damaged my neck and hip I left the RCN. Two of us had to act to save the life of a young officer cadet during a jack-stay transfer at sea.

Since 1983 I have been commanded *Voir et Dire* by the Privy Council of the Parliament of Canada – stand to be seen stand to be heard – when it comes to matters relating to Canada's ship of state. I have undertaken this on dozens of interesting national security and public policy issues, including the Naval Quarantine of North Korea. It was because the Naval Quarantine was an initiative recommended by a Canadian of renown that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council took it under advisement. If it had merely been presented by the United States it would not have received unanimous support at the UN Security Council. They have also taken note of my *Sanctity Principle in the Nuclear Age*.

Since 2006 I have taken an active role in the latest developments in the Korean Conflict, with the beginning of the weapons test cycle in North Korea's nuclear weapons program. The North Koreans have had an active

nuclear program since the early 1980's. It had taken the North Koreans over two decades to produce the fissile materials and expertise to test detonate their own nuclear weapons. In the early 1980's the North Koreans bought a design from the Khan organization in Pakistan, who had in turn been procured by the Khan organization from the People's Republic of China (a very simple two point detonation design). The fact that North Korea was now using the PRC design means the proliferation of this technology has come full circle – the PRC is to some degree responsible for the nuclear proliferation on the Korean peninsula.

The Thursday before North Korea's 2006 test I stopped by the office of a former chief policy advisor to the UN Secretary General and suggested to him that we should meet on Monday next *'to discuss a matter of some consequence.'* One day after North Korea's first sub-critical assembly test in October 2006 at my invitation I met with Dr. Andrew Mack over lunch here in Vancouver. Dr. Mack had just finished a posting in New York as Chief Policy Advisor with Dr. Kofi Annan, then Secretary General of the United Nations. Over lunch I recommended that the Community of Nations undertake a Naval Quarantine of North Korea if they continue past their sub-critical assembly tests, and undertake full-yield tests of nuclear weapons. Dr. Mack put my recommendation on the desk of the Secretary General of the United Nations, and I put my recommendation on the desk of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Canada (who in turn passed my recommendation along to the President of the United States). It was from my recommendation that UN Security Council Resolution 1718 (2006) came into being.

UNSCR 1718 outlined what would happen if the North Koreans went beyond a sub-critical assembly test of their nuclear weapons – the implementation of a Naval Quarantine. Three short years later, in the summer of 2009, when North Korea undertook a full yield nuclear test UN Security Council Resolution 1874 (2009) and my recommended Naval Quarantine was implemented, along with other sanctions.

What makes this Commonwealth Short Story submission a short story is that I am one of the architects of both UNSCR 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009). It is because of this that the Community of Nations take notice of my recommendations as to how to bring a peaceful end to the Korean Conflict, the longest state of war in modern times. It is for this reason people like the heads of the five Permanent Members to the United Nations Security Council weigh up my advice and recommendations. One of the reasons we are so close to a peaceful end to the Korean Conflict is because they have seen the wisdom in my words, and my recommendations have charted a safe course ahead.

What makes this Commonwealth Short Story submission a short story is a question of perspective. This story is about the real world, with real human suffering, and how one might help to bring a peaceful end to a sixty-five year old conflict.

Since UNSCR 1718 was passed there have been a few moments of high drama like in the sinking of the ROK Cheonan in March of 2010. How all

these matters relate together are outlined in my 2012 article ***Radarsat-2, The Naval Quarantine of North Korea and ICEOO*** (which is available at archive.org). In this article I outlined how the 2008 *Radarsat* matter was disposed of by Canada's Parliament. It was my wise counsel that resolved the Radarsat issue: I recommended the asset be shared within the auspices of N.A.T.O. which has been implemented at a Royal Navy facility north of London. I outline how *Radarsat*, a very advanced Synthetic Aperture Satellite, and related technology has made the Naval Quarantine of North Korea possible, and I also recommended the creation of a new United Nations Organization – the ***International Civil Earth Observation Organization*** – to assist the UN Security Council in his humanitarian and conflict resolutions efforts. I also recommended the Parliament of Canada to the Oslo Committee of the Nobel Prize Organization. I would receive a certificate of recognition from the Parliament of Canada for services rendered on this issue.

In recent years, along with providing both private and public recommendations, I have also taken to providing English Language Broadcasts through an internet resource ***Radio Free Vancouver***, (available at archive.org). On such a public platform as RFV I have also suggested that a peace treaty be signed between North and South Korea aboard naval ships here in English Bay in Vancouver, Canada. I have gone so far as to recommend that the Peace Treaty signing be officiated by Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II aboard the RN capital ship that is named in her honor, **HMS Queen Elizabeth**. Our noble Queen is the most respected Statesman of modern times and is trusted by all the Permanent Members of

the United Nations Security Council, and by the Community of Nations to undertake such a solemn diplomatic undertaking.

As I submit this short story to the Commonwealth Foundation you may note that this new Royal Navy aircraft carrier **HMS Queen Elizabeth** has been tasked to North American waters for a period of twelve weeks to work up its air crews and that it is a mere fourteen days travel time away from English Bay in Vancouver, Canada. I have suggested the Peace Treaty signing be on or about November the 11th, 2018.

If by chance such a momentous undertaking as the signing of a Peace Treaty between North and South Korea comes to fruition because of my efforts, I have recommended that the Community of Nations undertake two additional tasks – the creation of my recommended new United Nations Organization, the *International Civil Earth Observation Organization* (I.C.E.O.O.) and to ask that Canada be invited to become the sixth Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council. I have suggested that I.C.E.O.O. be situated up the street from my office at the new Grosvenor Building.

For the record, I am one of the Digital Archives Special Collections Masters at archive.org, and the only Canadian granted this honor. As you can imagine, I have earned it. . You might find my three essays at archive.org titled *Station Point Grey and Very Special Intelligence* interesting. I was assisted in writing these ground breaking historical essays by archivists at Bletchley Park and the N.S.A. Station Point Grey allowed a most secretive look inside the Hitler's Berlin and the Nazi regime for Winston Churchill,

Franklin D. Roosevelt and Canada's wartime Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King. This secret radio intercept station located in Vancouver was established by Lester B. Pearson, when he served as Undersecretary of External Affairs for the Parliament of Canada. Mr. Pearson was a close and personal wartime friend of both Winston Churchill, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1957, in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez Crisis, Mr. Pearson would win a Nobel Peace Prize for his many contributions to International Relations, not the least of which was establishing Peace Keeping as a mandate of the United Nations.

My three *Station Point Grey and Very Special Intelligence* essays inadvertently played a role in the last Provincial Election in British Columbia when a cabinet minister of Japanese Heritage was defeated for her 76+1 honorary UBC degree folly, bringing down a minority Government, and resulting in a change of Government. In writing these essays I had set out to merely tell one of the most remarkable stories of the Second World War, while Ms. Naomi Yamamoto, the cabinet minister who was not re-elected (and her close and personal friend the Asian Holocaust denier Dr. David Suzuki) set out to do something that was both racist and revisionist. You might connect the dots with regards to their familial heritage.

Perhaps to provide a fitting end to this short story I should lend to you my perspective on things. If you ask me what the biggest machine I have ever driven I can tell you it was 2.6 million kg of naval ship as the then youngest naval officer in Canada's Navy over three and a half decades ago. In more recent years I enjoyed being part and parcel of the effort to put Royal back

into the title Royal Canadian Navy. I also helped former President Barrack Obama earn his surprise 2009 Nobel Peace Prize by his carrying through with UNSCR 1874 (2009). Recently I asked of him a *quid pro quo*, to nominate the Parliament of Canada to the Oslo Committee of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, which he has done. In and above such matters, I am proud to see that the committee monitoring compliance by North Korea of the Naval Quarantine and UN sanctions is known as the 1718 Committee (named after my 2006 UNSCR 1718).

I was also amused to see how one of my three *Station Point Grey and Very Special Intelligence* essays became the basis of the little mouse trap set the North Koreans by the Panama Canal authority – resulting in the search and seizure of a North Korean vessel in the spring of 2013 carrying proscribed arms (a remake of the 1941 *Asaka Maru* affair that drew President Roosevelt to stand ready to search and seize any ship carrying proscribed arms through the Panama Canal).

My background in physics and mathematics lends me a unique perspective to history and public policy, as well as my service as a RCN officer, particularly in the field of Peace and Security. I have been lending wise counsel to the Parliament of Canada and to the Community of Nations for some thirty-five years. For instance, in 1983 I did an assessment of the shoot-down of KAL007 that caught the eye of a member of Canada's Senate and ended up on the desk of the Rt. Hon. Pierre E. Trudeau. As a result I was commanded *Voir et Dire* (stand to be seen and stand to be heard) by this Canadian Senator, the Hon. Ray Perrault.

One of the reasons there was a peaceful end to the Cold War is the role I played in the *St. Patrick's Day* Summit between President Ronald Reagan and Canada's Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1985 which had a diplomatic angle both with regards to the Soviet Union, and Mr. Reagan's decision to return to the United Nations during his second term as President (I had done my homework and knew that Mr. Reagan admired and respected FDR). You might want to read my essay *Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Reagan Give up Hope for the Future* at archive.org. Their particular summit day was chosen not merely because the key players were both Irish, but as a thank you to me!

The invitation to the March 17th 1985 Quebec summit had a particularly interesting diplomatic twist when it was delivered by hand by Vice President George Bush to Mikhail Gorbachev at Konstantin Chernenko's state funeral on March 13th, 1985. The invitation was President Reagan's way of saying he would work with Mr. Gorbachev. Mr. Gorbachev immediately wrote the President of the United States and said while it would be premature to meet with him that *St. Patrick's Day*, he promised they would have a summit meeting at the earliest possible moment. There had not been a summit meeting between the US President and the Soviet General Secretary for nearly five years, and the Cold War was at its tensest moments from 1983 to 1985. To borrow a phrase from Winston Churchill, the week of *St. Patrick's Day* 1985 was *the beginning of the end* of the Cold War.

If you want to study more about my wise counsel to Canada's Parliament and to the Community of Nations please feel free to read about my past and present articles at archive.org. Perhaps you would enjoy reading about my *Children of Chernobyl* initiative from 1986. Or whether it is in 1997 about my role in recommending to the Parliament of Canada the **Responsibility to Protect** (R2P) policies that formed the basis to N.A.T.O.'s response to the ethnic cleansing then ongoing in the former Yugoslavia, as well as my recommendations regarding the air campaign and how best to catch the commanders who were issuing the kill orders (by taking the communication chain apart from the bottom up and listening in to who was talking to whom at the very top of the chain of command). A Canadian, Madame Louise Arbour, later used this intelligence in her articles of prosecution of several of the war criminals responsible for the ethnic cleansing. I am one of the godfathers of the R2P policy. The **Responsibility to Protect** is now not merely a policy of the Parliament of Canada, but a policy set in place by the late Dr. Kofi Annan at the United Nations.

Another undertaking I am most proud of is when I was asked in 2003 what Canada's fundamental policy should be in Afghanistan I stated that '*the Parliament of Canada should commit itself to rebuild the elementary school system in Afghanistan.*' This was the one abiding policy that kept both Canada and many of our allies focused and united in that long deployment overseas. This is also something that won the admiration of our adversaries in Afghanistan. I put this recommendation on the desk of the Rt. Hon. Jean Chretien a few days before he step down as Canada's Prime Minister

(pushed out by a palace coup d'état by back room boys led by an ambitious Paul Martin).

In my November 2003 letter to Mr. Chretien I thanked him *'for his forty years of dedicated service to the House of Commons and his forty years of commitment to the ideals of the United Nations'* and asked him to do one last things as Canada's Prime Minister – to commit the Parliament of Canada to rebuild the elementary school system in Afghanistan. Mr. Chretien put my request on the desk of the Rt. Hon. Governor General of Canada Madame Adrienne Clarkson who took my advice to heart and helped to rebuild fifty elementary schools on Kandahar Province, the home of the Taliban. By the way Mr. Chretien had been mentored by the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson when he first entered the Parliament of Canada in 1963.

In 2009 Madame Clarkson and I would work together on another undertaking in Afghanistan, to recommend the Governor of Kandahar Province Dr. Tooryalai Wesa to the Oslo Committee of the Nobel Peace Prize. A few days prior to that year's surprised announcement (that Mr. Obama would be honored), the Chairman of the Oslo Committee publicly acknowledged that Dr. Wesa was a contender for a Peace Prize *'but had not yet done enough to be a recipient.'* This may surprise you, but neither Madame Clarkson nor I were particularly displeased with this announcement for those few words served a specific purpose ... they helped to save the life of Dr. Wesa as the Taliban murdered all the other senior officials around him. Those few words elevated Dr. Wesa to the stature of cleric, which in the Muslim world made him sacrosanct – an untouchable person. Prior to

2009 there have been several attempts on his life, but after the Oslo Committee's public acknowledgement there was only one halfhearted attempt, and the Taliban gave up their own. Dr. Wesa survived his time as Governor of Kandahar Province and is now safely back home here in, Canada. A few years ago I also recommended Madame Clarkson to the Oslo Committee, but a 'scratched and tarnished penny' won that year. Madame Clarkson would be more than worthy of such an honor.

What I do is not merely a question of perspective. I am a Catholic, a Loyal Subject of the Crown and a Friend to Canada's Parliament. My conscience and the wise instruction I have received over my lifetime have helped me see the world in a certain way. But there is more than that.

As I have mentioned, when I was all of twenty years old I managed to severely damage my neck and spine saving the life of a happy-go-lucky officer cadet during a jack-stay transfer aboard HMCS Qu'Appelle, one of Canada's old naval frigates. The young officer cadet walked away without a scratch and I have been infirmed ever since. I should have perished that summer, but my abiding faith carried me through. My accident at sea occurred a few days after Pope John Paul II was nearly assassinated in 1981. I learned from his courage and bravery how best to manage with my infirmity. For all my adult life I have lived in chronic and debilitating pain. And I have been at the gates of heaven countless times. But somehow I remain here on Earth ... I still have things to do.

When Pope John Paul II passed away I wrote a letter praising him which expressed a belief that the peaceful end of the Cold War was to one great degree of his doing. The letter can be found in the Vatican archives. My final words in this letter was *Pax Vobiscum* – go in peace. When Pope John Paul II was Canonized as Saint John Paul the Great, with only two miracles to his credit, it was only then that I understood that I was perhaps the third of his great miracles. This is perhaps the crux of the story I am sharing with you today.

Now over thirty five years since that fateful afternoon aboard one of Her Majesty's Canadian Ships, my friends will tell you that I am indeed an officer and a gentleman, a diplomat and a scholar. You can see this in my words and in my deeds.

They will also tell you that as long as I continue to do good deeds, God let's me live in my own private purgatory. The only thing I ultimately strive for is my place in heaven.

And so I stand up to be seen and stand to be heard... what I am in fact saying is something that I was taught long ago in a sermon at a Catholic Church ... *blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*

Life is a blessed question of perspective.

Prose

Princess Elizabeth's 1940 Children's Hour Address

13 October, 1940



[**London**] In wishing you all good evening, I feel that I am speaking to friends and companions who have shared with my sister and myself many a happy children's hour.

Thousands of you in this country have had to leave your homes and be separated from your fathers and mothers. My sister Margaret Rose and I feel so much for you, as we know from experience what it means to be away from those you love most of all. To you living in new surroundings, we send a message of true sympathy and at the same time we would like to thank the kind people who have welcomed you to their homes in the country.

All of us children who are still at home think continually of our friends and relations who have gone overseas, who have travelled thousands of miles to

find a wartime home and a kindly welcome in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States of America. My sister and I feel we know quite a lot about these countries: our father and mother have so often talked to us of their visits to different parts of the world. So it is not difficult for us to picture the sort of life you are all leading and to think of all the new sights you must be seeing and the adventures you must be having. But I am sure that you too are often thinking of the old country. I know you won't forget us. It is just because we are not forgetting you that I want, on behalf of all the children at home, to send you our love and best wishes to you and to your kind hosts as well.

Before I finish, I can truthfully say to you all that we children at home are full of cheerfulness and courage. We are trying to do all we can to help our gallant sailors, soldiers and airmen and we are trying too to bear our own share of the danger and sadness of war. We know, every one of us, that in the end all will be well, for God will care for us and give us victory and peace. And when peace comes, remember, it will be for us, the children of today, to make the world of tomorrow a better and happier place.

My sister is by my side and we are both going to say goodnight to you. Come on, Margaret. (Margaret: "Goodnight children"). Goodnight, and good luck to you all.

Man in the Arena by Theodore Roosevelt

[Paris] Strange and impressive associations rise in the mind of a man from the New World who speaks before this august body in this ancient institution of learning. Before his eyes pass the shadows of mighty kings and warlike nobles, of great masters of law and theology; through the shining dust of the dead centuries he sees crowded figures that tell of the power and learning and splendor of times gone by; and he sees also the innumerable host of humble students to whom clerkship meant emancipation, to whom it was well-nigh the only outlet from the dark thralldom of the Middle Ages.

This was the most famous university of medieval Europe at a time when no one dreamed that there was a New World to discover. Its services to the cause of human knowledge already stretched far back into the remote past at the time when my forefathers, three centuries ago, were among the sparse bands of traders, ploughmen, wood-choppers, and fisher-folk who, in hard struggle with the iron unfriendliness of the Indian-haunted land, were laying the foundations of what has now become the giant republic of the West. To conquer a continent, to tame the shaggy roughness of wild nature, means grim warfare; and the generations engaged in it cannot keep, still less add to, the stores of garnered wisdom which once were theirs, and which are still in the hands of their brethren who dwell in the old land. To conquer the wilderness means to wrest victory from the same hostile forces with which mankind struggled in the immemorial infancy of our race. The primeval conditions must be met by primeval qualities which are incompatible with the retention of much that has been painfully acquired by humanity as

through the ages it has striven upward toward civilization. In conditions so primitive there can be but a primitive culture. At first only the rudest schools can be established, for no others would meet the needs of the hard-driven, sinewy folk who thrust forward the frontier in the teeth of savage man and savage nature; and many years elapse before any of these schools can develop into seats of higher learning and broader culture.

The pioneer days pass; the stump-dotted clearings expand into vast stretches of fertile farmland; the stockaded clusters of log cabins change into towns; the hunters of game, the fellers of trees, the rude frontier traders and tillers of the soil, the men who wander all their lives long through the wilderness as the heralds and harbingers of an oncoming civilization, themselves vanish before the civilization for which they have prepared the way. The children of their successors and supplanters, and then their children and children's children, change and develop with extraordinary rapidity. The conditions accentuate vices and virtues, energy and ruthlessness, all the good qualities and all the defects of an intense individualism, self-reliant, self-centred, far more conscious of its rights than of its duties, and blind to its own shortcomings. To the hard materialism of the frontier days succeeds the hard materialism of an industrialism even more intense and absorbing than that of the older nations; although these themselves have likewise already entered on the age of a complex and predominantly industrial civilization.

As the country grows, its people, who have won success in so many lines, turn back to try to recover the possessions of the mind and the spirit, which perforce their fathers threw aside in order better to wage the first rough

battles for the continent their children inherit. The leaders of thought and of action grope their way forward to a new life, realizing, sometimes dimly, sometimes clear-sightedly, that the life of material gain, whether for a nation or an individual, is of value only as a foundation, only as there is added to it the uplift that comes from devotion to loftier ideals. The new life thus sought can in part be developed a fresh from what is round about in the New World; but it can be developed in full only by freely drawing upon the treasure-houses of the Old World, upon the treasures stored in the ancient abodes of wisdom and learning, such as this where I speak to-day. It is a mistake for any nation merely to copy another; but it is an even greater mistake, it is a proof of weakness in any nation, not to be anxious to learn from another, and willing and able to adapt that learning to the new national conditions and make it fruitful and productive therein. It is for us of the New World to sit at the feet of the Gamaliel of the Old; then, if we have the right stuff in us, we can show that Paul in his turn can become a teacher as well as a scholar.

To-day I shall speak to you on the subject of individual citizenship, the one subject of vital importance to you, my hearers, and to me and my countrymen, because you and we are citizens of great democratic republics. A democratic republic such as each of ours—an effort to realize in its full sense government by, of, and for the people—represents the most gigantic of all possible social experiments, the one fraught with greatest possibilities alike for good and for evil. The success of republics like yours and like ours means the glory, and our failure the despair, of mankind; and for you and for us the question of the quality of the individual citizen is supreme. Under other forms of government, under the rule of one man or of a very few men,

the quality of the rulers is all-important. If, under such governments, the quality of the rulers is high enough, then the nation may for generations lead a brilliant career, and add substantially to the sum of world achievement, no matter how low the quality of the average citizen; because the average citizen is an almost negligible quantity in working out the final results of that type of national greatness.

But with you and with us the case is different. With you here, and with us in my own home, in the long run, success or failure will be conditioned upon the way in which the average man, the average woman, does his or her duty, first in the ordinary, every-day affairs of life, and next in those great occasional crises which call for the heroic virtues. The average citizen must be a good citizen if our republics are to succeed. The stream will not permanently rise higher than the main source; and the main source of national power and national greatness is found in the average citizenship of the nation. Therefore it behooves us to do our best to see that the standard of the average citizen is kept high; and the average cannot be kept high unless the standard of the leaders is very much higher.

It is well if a large proportion of the leaders in any republic, in any democracy, are, as a matter of course, drawn from the classes represented in this audience to-day; but only provided that those classes possess the gifts of sympathy with plain people and of devotion to great ideals. You and those like you have received special advantages; you have all of you had the opportunity for mental training; many of you have had leisure; most of you have had a chance for the enjoyment of life far greater than comes to the

majority of your fellows. To you and your kind much has been given, and from you much should be expected. Yet there are certain failings against which it is especially incumbent that both men of trained and cultivated intellect, and men of inherited wealth and position, should especially guard themselves, because to these failings they are especially liable; and if yielded to, their—your—chances of useful service are at an end.

Let the man of learning, the man of lettered leisure, beware of that queer and cheap temptation to pose to himself and to others as the cynic, as the man who has outgrown emotions and beliefs, the man to whom good and evil are as one. The poorest way to face life is to face it with a sneer. There are many men who feel a kind of twisted pride in cynicism; there are many who confine themselves to criticism of the way others do what they themselves dare not even attempt. There is no more unhealthy being, no man less worthy of respect, than he who either really holds, or feigns to hold, an attitude of sneering disbelief toward all that is great and lofty, whether in achievement or in that noble effort which, even if it fails, comes second to achievement. A cynical habit of thought and speech, a readiness to criticize work which the critic himself never tries to perform, an intellectual aloofness which will not accept contact with life's realities—all these are marks, not, as the possessor would fain think, of superiority, but of weakness. They mark the men unfit to bear their part manfully in the stern strife of living, who seek, in the affectation of contempt for the achievements of others, to hide from others and from themselves their own weakness. The rôle is easy; there is none easier, save only the rôle of the man who sneers alike at both criticism and performance.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Shame on the man of cultivated taste who permits refinement to develop into a fastidiousness that unfits him for doing the rough work of a workaday world. Among the free peoples who govern themselves there is but a small field of usefulness open for the men of cloistered life who shrink from contact with their fellows. Still less room is there for those who deride or slight what is done by those who actually bear the brunt of the day; nor yet for those others who always profess that they would like to take action, if only the conditions of life were not what they actually are. The man who does nothing cuts the same sordid figure in the pages of history, whether he be cynic, or fop, or voluptuary. There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of the great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder. Well for these men if they succeed; well also, though not so

well, if they fail, given only that they have nobly ventured, and have put forth all their heart and strength. It is war-worn Hotspur, spent with hard fighting, he of the many errors and the valiant end, over whose memory we love to linger, not over the memory of the young lord who "but for the vile guns would have been a soldier."

France has taught many lessons to other nations: surely one of the most important is the lesson her whole history teaches, that a high artistic and literary development is compatible with notable leadership in arms and statecraft. The brilliant gallantry of the French soldier has for many centuries been proverbial; and during these same centuries at every court in Europe the "freemasons of fashion" have treated the French tongue as their common speech; while every artist and man of letters, and every man of science able to appreciate that marvelous instrument of precision, French prose, has turned toward France for aid and inspiration. How long the leadership in arms and letters has lasted is curiously illustrated by the fact that the earliest masterpiece in a modern tongue is the splendid French epic which tells of Roland's doom and the vengeance of Charlemagne when the lords of the Frankish host were stricken at Roncesvalles.

Let those who have, keep, let those who have not, strive to attain, a high standard of cultivation and scholarship. Yet let us remember that these stand second to certain other things. There is need of a sound body, and even more need of a sound mind. But above mind and above body stands character—the sum of those qualities which we mean when we speak of a man's force and courage, of his good faith and sense of honor. I believe in exercise for

the body, always provided that we keep in mind that physical development is a means and not an end. I believe, of course, in giving to all the people a good education. But the education must contain much besides book-learning in order to be really good. We must ever remember that no keenness and subtleness of intellect, no polish, no cleverness, in any way make up for the lack of the great solid qualities. Self-restraint, self-mastery, common sense, the power of accepting individual responsibility and yet of acting in conjunction with others, courage and resolution—these are the qualities which mark a masterful people. Without them no people can control itself, or save itself from being controlled from the outside. I speak to a brilliant assemblage; I speak in a great university which represents the flower of the highest intellectual development; I pay all homage to intellect, and to elaborate and specialized training of the intellect; and yet I know I shall have the assent of all of you present when I add that more important still are the commonplace, every-day qualities and virtues.

Such ordinary, every-day qualities include the will and the power to work, to fight at need, and to have plenty of healthy children. The need that the average man shall work is so obvious as hardly to warrant insistence. There are a few people in every country so born that they can lead lives of leisure. These fill a useful function if they make it evident that leisure does not mean idleness; for some of the most valuable work needed by civilization is essentially non-remunerative in its character, and of course the people who do this work should in large part be drawn from those to whom remuneration is an object of indifference. But the average man must earn his own livelihood. He should be trained to do so, and he should be trained to feel

that he occupies a contemptible position if he does not do so; that he is not an object of envy if he is idle, at whichever end of the social scale he stands, but an object of contempt, an object of derision.

In the next place, the good man should be both a strong and a brave man; that is, he should be able to fight, he should be able to serve his country as a soldier, if the need arises. There are well-meaning philosophers who declaim against the unrighteousness of war. They are right only if they lay all their emphasis upon the unrighteousness. War is a dreadful thing, and unjust war is a crime against humanity. But it is such a crime because it is unjust, not because it is war. The choice must ever be in favor of righteousness and this whether the alternative be peace or whether the alternative be war. The question must not be merely; Is there to be peace or war? The question must be; Is the right to prevail? Are the great laws of righteousness once more to be fulfilled? And the answer from a strong and virile people must be, "Yes," whatever the cost. Every honorable effort should always be made to avoid war, just as every honorable effort should always be made by the individual in private life to keep out of a brawl, to keep out of trouble; but no self-respecting individual, no self-respecting nation, can or ought to submit to wrong.

Finally, even more important than ability to work, even more important than ability to fight at need, is it to remember that the chief of blessings for any nation is that it shall leave its seed to inherit the land. It was the crown of blessings in Biblical times; and it is the crown of blessings now. The greatest of all curses is the curse of sterility, and the severest of all condemnations

should be that visited upon willful sterility. The first essential in any civilization is that the man and the woman shall be father and mother of healthy children, so that the race shall increase and not decrease. If this is not so, if through no fault of the society there is failure to increase, it is a great misfortune. If the failure is due to deliberate and willful fault, then it is not merely a misfortune, it is one of those crimes of ease and self-indulgence, of shrinking from pain and effort and risk, which in the long run Nature punishes more heavily than any other. If we of the great republics, if we, the free people who claim to have emancipated ourselves from the thralldom of wrong and error, bring down on our heads the curse that comes upon the willfully barren, then it will be an idle waste of breath to prattle of our achievements, to boast of all that we have done. No refinement of life, no delicacy of taste, no material progress, no sordid heaping up of riches, no sensuous development of art and literature, can in any way compensate for the loss of the great fundamental virtues; and of these great fundamental virtues the greatest is the race's power to perpetuate the race.

Character must show itself in the man's performance both of the duty he owes himself and of the duty he owes the state. The man's foremost duty is owed to himself and his family; and he can do this duty only by earning money, by providing what is essential to material well-being; it is only after this has been done that he can hope to build a higher superstructure on the solid material foundation; it is only after this has been done that he can help in movements for the general well-being. He must pull his own weight first, and only after this can his surplus strength be of use to the general public. It is not good to excite that bitter laughter which expresses contempt; and

contempt is what we feel for the being whose enthusiasm to benefit mankind is such that he is a burden to those nearest him; who wishes to do great things for humanity in the abstract, but who cannot keep his wife in comfort or educate his children.

Nevertheless, while laying all stress on this point, while not merely acknowledging but insisting upon the fact that there must be a basis of material well-being for the individual as for the nation, let us with equal emphasis insist that this material wellbeing represents nothing but the foundation, and that the foundation, though indispensable, is worthless unless upon it is raised the superstructure of a higher life. That is why I decline to recognize the mere multimillionaire, the man of mere wealth, as an asset of value to any country; and especially as not an asset to my own country. If he has earned or uses his wealth in a way that makes him of real benefit, of real use—and such is often the case—why, then he does become an asset of worth. But it is the way in which it has been earned or used, and not the mere fact of wealth, that entitles him to the credit. There is need in business, as in most other forms of human activity, of the great guiding intelligences. Their places can not be supplied by any number of lesser intelligences. It is a good thing that they should have ample recognition, ample reward. But we must not transfer our admiration to the reward instead of to the deed rewarded; and if what should be the reward exists without the service having been rendered, then admiration will come only from those who are mean of soul. The truth is that, after a certain measure of tangible material success or reward has been achieved, the question of increasing it becomes of constantly less importance compared to other things that can be

done in life. It is a bad thing for a nation to raise and to admire a false standard of success; and there can be no falser standard than that set by the deification of material well-being in and for itself. The man who, for any cause for which he is himself accountable, has failed to support himself and those for whom he is responsible, ought to feel that he has fallen lamentably short in his prime duty. But the man who, having far surpassed the limit of providing for the wants, both of body and mind, of himself and of those depending upon him, then piles up a great fortune, for the acquisition or retention of which he returns no corresponding benefit to the nation as a whole, should himself be made to feel that, so far from being a desirable, he is an unworthy, citizen of the community; that he is to be neither admired nor envied; that his right-thinking fellow countrymen put him low in the scale of citizenship, and leave him to be consoled by the admiration of those whose level of purpose is even lower than his own.

My position as regards the moneyed interests can be put in a few words. In every civilized society property rights must be carefully safeguarded; ordinarily, and in the great majority of cases, human rights and property rights are fundamentally and in the long run identical; but when it clearly appears that there is a real conflict between them, human rights must have the upper hand, for property belongs to man and not man to property.

In fact, it is essential to good citizenship clearly to understand that there are certain qualities which we in a democracy are prone to admire in and of themselves, which ought by rights to be judged admirable or the reverse solely from the standpoint of the use made of them. Foremost among these I

should include two very distinct gifts—the gift of money-making and the gift of oratory. Money-making, the money touch, I have spoken of above. It is a quality which in a moderate degree is essential. It may be useful when developed to a very great degree, but only if accompanied and controlled by other qualities; and without such control the possessor tends to develop into one of the least attractive types produced by a modern industrial democracy. So it is with the orator. It is highly desirable that a leader of opinion in a democracy should be able to state his views clearly and convincingly. But all that the oratory can do of value to the community is to enable the man thus to explain himself; if it enables the orator to persuade his hearers to put false values on things, it merely makes him a power for mischief. Some excellent public servants have not the gift at all, and must rely upon their deeds to speak for them; and unless the oratory does represent genuine conviction based on good common sense and able to be translated into efficient performance, then the better the oratory the greater the damage to the public it deceives. Indeed, it is a sign of marked political weakness in any commonwealth if the people tend to be carried away by mere oratory, if they tend to value words in and for themselves, as divorced from the deeds for which they are supposed to stand. The phrase-maker, the phrase-monger, the ready talker, however great his power, whose speech does not make for courage, sobriety, and right understanding, is simply a noxious element in the body politic, and it speaks ill for the public if he has influence over them. To admire the gift of oratory without regard to the moral quality behind the gift is to do wrong to the Republic.

Of course all that I say of the orator applies with even greater force to the orator's latter-day and more influential brother, the journalist. The power of the journalist is great, but he is entitled neither to respect nor admiration because of that power unless it is used aright. He can do, and he often does, great good. He can do, and he often does, infinite mischief. All journalists, all writers, for the very reason that they appreciate the vast possibilities of their profession, should bear testimony against those who deeply discredit it. Offences against taste and morals, which are bad enough in a private citizen, are infinitely worse if made into instruments for debauching the community through a newspaper. Mendacity, slander, sensationalism, inanity, vapid triviality, all are potent factors for the debauchery of the public mind and conscience. The excuse advanced for vicious writing, that the public demands it and that the demand must be supplied, can no more be admitted than if it were advanced by the purveyors of food who sell poisonous adulterations.

In short, the good citizen in a republic must realize that he ought to possess two sets of qualities, and that neither avails without the other. He must have those qualities which make for efficiency; and he must also have those qualities which direct the efficiency into channels for the public good. He is useless if he is inefficient. There is nothing to be done with that type of citizen of whom all that can be said is that he is harmless. Virtue which is dependent upon a sluggish circulation is not impressive. There is little place in active life for the timid good man. The man who is saved by weakness from robust wickedness is likewise rendered immune from the robust virtues. The good citizen in a republic must first of all be able to hold his

own. He is no good citizen unless he has the ability which will make him work hard and which at need will make him fight hard. The good citizen is not a good citizen unless he is an efficient citizen.

But if a man's efficiency is not guided and regulated by a moral sense, then the more efficient he is the worse he is, the more dangerous to the body politic. Courage, intellect, all the masterful qualities, serve but to make a man more evil if they are used merely for that man's own advancement, with brutal indifference to the rights of others. It speaks ill for the community if the community worships these qualities and treats their possessors as heroes regardless of whether the qualities are used rightly or wrongly. It makes no difference as to the precise way in which this sinister efficiency is shown. It makes no difference whether such a man's force and ability betray themselves in the career of money-maker or politician, soldier or orator, journalist or popular leader. If the man works for evil, then the more successful he is the more he should be despised and condemned by all upright and far-seeing men. To judge a man merely by success is an abhorrent wrong; and if the people at large habitually so judge men, if they grow to condone wickedness because the wicked man triumphs, they show their inability to understand that in the last analysis free institutions rest upon the character of citizenship, and that by such admiration of evil they prove themselves unfit for liberty.

The homely virtues of the household, the ordinary workaday virtues which make the woman a good housewife and housemother, which make the man a hard worker, a good husband and father, a good soldier at need, stand at the

bottom of character. But of course many others must be added thereto if a state is to be not only free but great. Good citizenship is not good citizenship if exhibited only in the home. There remain the duties of the individual in relation to the state, and these duties are none too easy under the conditions which exist where the effort is made to carry on free government in a complex, industrial civilization. Perhaps the most important thing the ordinary citizen, and, above all, the leader of ordinary citizens, has to remember in political life is that he must not be a sheer doctrinaire. The closet philosopher, the refined and cultured individual who from his library tells how men ought to be governed under ideal conditions, is of no use in actual governmental work; and the one-sided fanatic, and still more the mob-leader, and the insincere man who to achieve power promises what by no possibility can be performed, are not merely useless but noxious.

The citizen must have high ideals, and yet he must be able to achieve them in practical fashion. No permanent good comes from aspirations so lofty that they have grown fantastic and have become impossible and indeed undesirable to realize. The impracticable visionary is far less often the guide and precursor than he is the embittered foe of the real reformer, of the man who, with stumblings and shortcomings, yet does in some shape, in practical fashion, give effect to the hopes and desires of those who strive for better things. Woe to the empty phrase-maker, to the empty idealist, who, instead of making ready the ground for the man of action, turns against him when he appears and hampers him as he does the work! Moreover, the preacher of ideals must remember how sorry and contemptible is the figure which he will cut, how great the damage that he will do, if he does not himself, in his

own life, strive measurably to realize the ideals that he preaches for others. Let him remember also that the worth of the ideal must be largely determined by the success with which it can in practice be realized. We should abhor the so-called "practical" men whose practicality assumes the shape of that peculiar baseness which finds its expression in disbelief in morality and decency, in disregard of high standards of living and conduct. Such a creature is the worst enemy of the body politic. But only less desirable as a citizen is his nominal opponent and real ally, the man of fantastic vision who makes the impossible better forever the enemy of the possible good.

We can just as little afford to follow the doctrinaires of an extreme individualism as the doctrinaires of an extreme socialism. Individual initiative, so far from being discouraged, should be stimulated; and yet we should remember that, as society develops and grows more complex, we continually find that things which once it was desirable to leave to individual initiative can, under the changed conditions, be performed with better results by common effort. It is quite impossible, and equally undesirable, to draw in theory a hard-and-fast line which shall always divide the two sets of cases. This everyone who is not cursed with the pride of the closet philosopher will see, if he will only take the trouble to think about some of our commonest phenomena. For instance, when people live on isolated farms or in little hamlets, each house can be left to attend to its own drainage and water supply; but the mere multiplication of families in a given area produces new problems which, because they differ in size, are found to differ not only in degree but in kind from the old; and the questions of drainage and water

supply have to be considered from the common standpoint. It is not a matter for abstract dogmatizing to decide when this point is reached; it is a matter to be tested by practical experiment. Much of the discussion about socialism and individualism is entirely pointless, because of failure to agree on terminology. It is not good to be the slave of names. I am a strong individualist by personal habit, inheritance, and conviction; but it is a mere matter of common sense to recognize that the state, the community, the citizens acting together, can do a number of things better than if they were left to individual action. The individualism which finds its expression in the abuse of physical force is checked very early in the growth of civilization, and we of to-day should in our turn strive to shackle or destroy that individualism which triumphs by greed and cunning, which exploits the weak by craft instead of ruling them by brutality. We ought to go with any man in the effort to bring about justice and the equality of opportunity, to turn the tool-user more and more into the tool-owner, to shift burdens so that they can be more equitably borne. The deadening effect on any race of the adoption of a logical and extreme socialistic system could not be overstated; it would spell sheer destruction; it would produce grosser wrong and outrage, fouler immorality, than any existing system. But this does not mean that we may not with great advantage adopt certain of the principles professed by some given set of men who happen to call themselves Socialists; to be afraid to do so would be to make a mark of weakness on our part.

But we should not take part in acting a lie any more than in telling a lie. We should not say that men are equal where they are not equal, nor proceed

upon the assumption that there is an equality where it does not exist; but we should strive to bring about a measurable equality, at least to the extent of preventing the inequality which is due to force or fraud. Abraham Lincoln, a man of the plain people, blood of their blood and bone of their bone, who all his life toiled and wrought and suffered for them, and at the end died for them, who always strove to represent them, who would never tell an untruth to or for them, spoke of the doctrine of equality with his usual mixture of idealism and sound common sense. He said (I omit what was of merely local significance):

"I think the authors of the Declaration of Independence intended to include all men, but that they did not mean to declare all men equal *in all respects*. They did not mean to say all men were equal in color, size, intellect, moral development, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness in what they did consider all men created equal—equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This they said, and this they meant. They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth that all were then actually enjoying that equality, or yet that they were about to confer it immediately upon them. They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society which should be familiar to all—constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and, even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people, everywhere."

We are bound in honor to refuse to listen to those men who would make us desist from the effort to do away with the inequality which means injustice;

the inequality of right, of opportunity, of privilege. We are bound in honor to strive to bring ever nearer the day when, as far as is humanly possible, we shall be able to realize the ideal that each man shall have an equal opportunity to show the stuff that is in him by the way in which he renders service. There should, so far as possible, be equality of opportunity to render service; but just so long as there is inequality of service there should and must be inequality of reward. We may be sorry for the general, the painter, the artist, the worker in any profession or of any kind, whose misfortune rather than whose fault it is that he does his work ill. But the reward must go to the man who does his work well; for any other course is to create a new kind of privilege, the privilege of folly and weakness; and special privilege is injustice, whatever form it takes.

To say that the thriftless, the lazy, the vicious, the incapable, ought to have the reward given to those who are far-sighted, capable, and upright, is to say what is not true and cannot be true. Let us try to level up, but let us beware of the evil of leveling down. If a man stumbles, it is a good thing to help him to his feet. Every one of us needs a helping hand now and then. But if a man lies down, it is a waste of time to try to carry him; and it is a very bad thing for every one if we make men feel that the same reward will come to those who shirk their work and to those who do it.

Let us, then, take into account the actual facts of life, and not be misled into following any proposal for achieving the millennium, for re-creating the golden age, until we have subjected it to hardheaded examination. On the other hand, it is foolish to reject a proposal merely because it is advanced by

visionaries. If a given scheme is proposed, look at it on its merits, and, in considering it, disregard formulas. It does not matter in the least who proposes it, or why. If it seems good, try it. If it proves good, accept it; otherwise reject it. There are plenty of men calling themselves Socialists with whom, up to a certain point, it is quite possible to work. If the next step is one which both we and they wish to take, why of course take it, without any regard to the fact that our views as to the tenth step may differ. But, on the other hand, keep clearly in mind that, though it has been worthwhile to take one step, this does not in the least mean that it may not be highly disadvantageous to take the next. It is just as foolish to refuse all progress because people demanding it desire at some points to go to absurd extremes, as it would be to go to these absurd extremes simply because some of the measures advocated by the extremists were wise.

The good citizen will demand liberty for himself, and as a matter of pride he will see to it that others receive the liberty which he thus claims as his own. Probably the best test of true love of liberty in any country is the way in which minorities are treated in that country. Not only should there be complete liberty in matters of religion and opinion, but complete liberty for each man to lead his life as he desires, provided only that in so doing he does not wrong his neighbor. Persecution is bad because it is persecution, and without reference to which side happens at the moment to be the persecutor and which the persecuted. Class hatred is bad in just the same way, and without any regard to the individual who, at a given time, substitutes loyalty to a class for loyalty to the nation, or substitutes hatred of men because they happen to come in a certain social category, for judgment awarded them

according to their conduct. Remember always that the same measure of condemnation should be extended to the arrogance which would look down upon or crush any man because he is poor and to the envy and hatred which would destroy a man because he is wealthy. The overbearing brutality of the man of wealth or power, and the envious and hateful malice directed against wealth or power, are really at root merely different manifestations of the same quality, merely the two sides of the same shield. The man who, if born to wealth and power, exploits and ruins his less fortunate brethren is at heart the same as the greedy and violent demagogue who excites those who have not property to plunder those who have. The gravest wrong upon his country is inflicted by that man, whatever his station, who seeks to make his countrymen divide primarily on the line that separates class from class, occupation from occupation, men of more wealth from men of less wealth, instead of remembering that the only safe standard is that which judges each man on his worth as a man, whether he be rich or poor, without regard to his profession or to his station in life. Such is the only true democratic test, the only test that can with propriety be applied in a republic. There have been many republics in the past, both in what we call antiquity and in what we call the Middle Ages. They fell, and the prime factor in their fall was the fact that the parties tended to divide along the line that separates wealth from poverty. It made no difference which side was successful; it made no difference whether the republic fell under the rule of an oligarchy or the rule of a mob. In either case, when once loyalty to a class had been substituted for loyalty to the republic, the end of the republic was at hand. There is no greater need to-day than the need to keep ever in mind the fact that the cleavage between right and wrong, between good citizenship and bad

citizenship, runs at right angles to, and not parallel with, the lines of cleavage between class and class, between occupation and occupation. Ruin looks us in the face if we judge a man by his position instead of judging him by his conduct in that position.

In a republic, to be successful we must learn to combine intensity of conviction with a broad tolerance of difference of conviction. Wide differences of opinion in matters of religious, political, and social belief must exist if conscience and intellect alike are not to be stunted, if there is to be room for healthy growth. Bitter internecine hatreds, based on such differences, are signs, not of earnestness of belief, but of that fanaticism which, whether religious or anti-religious, democratic or anti-democratic, is itself but a manifestation of the gloomy bigotry which has been the chief factor in the downfall of so many, many nations.

Of one man in especial, beyond anyone else, the citizens of a republic should beware, and that is of the man who appeals to them to support him on the ground that he is hostile to other citizens of the republic, that he will secure for those who elect him, in one shape or another, profit at the expense of other citizens of the republic. It makes no difference whether he appeals to class hatred or class interest, to religious or anti-religious prejudice. The man who makes such an appeal should always be presumed to make it for the sake of furthering his own interest. The very last thing that an intelligent and self-respecting member of a democratic community should do is to reward any public man because that public man says he will get the private citizen something to which this private citizen is not entitled, or will gratify some

emotion or animosity which this private citizen ought not to possess. Let me illustrate this by one anecdote from my own experience. A number of years ago I was engaged in cattle-ranching on the great plains of the western United States. There were no fences. The cattle wandered free, the ownership of each being determined by the brand; the calves were branded with the brand of the cows they followed. If on the round-up an animal was passed by, the following year it would appear as an unbranded yearling, and was then called a maverick. By the custom of the country these mavericks were branded with the brand of the man on whose range they were found. One day I was riding the range with a newly hired cowboy, and we came upon a maverick. We roped and threw it; then we built a little fire, took out a cinch-ring, heated it at the fire; and the cowboy started to put on the brand. I said to him, "It is So-and-so's brand," naming the man on whose range we happened to be. He answered: "That's all right, boss; I know my business." In another moment I said to him: "Hold on, you are putting on my brand!" To which he answered: "That's all right; I always put on the boss's brand." I answered: "Oh, very well. Now you go straight back to the ranch and get what is owing to you; I don't need you any longer." He jumped up and said: "Why, what's the matter? I was putting on your brand." And I answered: "Yes, my friend, and if you will steal *for* me you will steal *from* me."

Now, the same principle which applies in private life applies also in public life. If a public man tries to get your vote by saying that he will do something wrong *in* your interest, you can be absolutely certain that if ever it becomes worth his while he will do something wrong *against* your interest.

So much for the citizenship of the individual in his relations to his family, to his neighbor, to the state. There remain duties of citizenship which the state, the aggregation of all the individuals, owes in connection with other states, with other nations. Let me say at once that I am no advocate of a foolish cosmopolitanism. I believe that a man must be a good patriot before he can be, and as the only possible way of being, a good citizen of the world. Experience teaches us that the average man who protests that his international feeling swamps his national feeling, that he does not care for his country because he cares so much for mankind, in actual practice proves himself the foe of mankind; that the man who says that he does not care to be a citizen of any one country, because he is a citizen of the world, is in very fact usually an exceedingly undesirable citizen of whatever corner of the world he happens at the moment to be in. In the dim future all moral needs and moral standards may change; but at present, if a man can view his own country and all other countries from the same level with tepid indifference, it is wise to distrust him, just as it is wise to distrust the man who can take the same dispassionate view of his wife and his mother. However broad and deep a man's sympathies, however intense his activities, he need have no fear that they will be cramped by love of his native land.

Now, this does not mean in the least that a man should not wish to do good outside of his native land. On the contrary, just as I think that the man who loves his family is more apt to be a good neighbor than the man who does not, so I think that the most useful member of the family of nations is normally a strongly patriotic nation. So far from patriotism being inconsistent with a proper regard for the rights of other nations, I hold that

the true patriot, who is as jealous of the national honor as a gentleman is of his own honor, will be careful to see that the nation neither inflicts nor suffers wrong, just as a gentleman scorns equally to wrong others or to suffer others to wrong him. I do not for one moment admit that political morality is different from private morality, that a promise made on the stump differs from a promise made in private life. I do not for one moment admit that a man should act deceitfully as a public servant in his dealings with other nations, any more than that he should act deceitfully in his dealings as a private citizen with other private citizens. I do not for one moment admit that a nation should treat other nations in a different spirit from that in which an honorable man would treat other men.

In practically applying this principle to the two sets of cases there is, of course, a great practical difference to be taken into account. We speak of international law; but international law is something wholly different from private or municipal law, and the capital difference is that there is a sanction for the one and no sanction for the other; that there is an outside force which compels individuals to obey the one, while there is no such outside force to compel obedience as regards the other. International law will, I believe, as the generations pass, grow stronger and stronger until in some way or other there develops the power to make it respected. But as yet it is only in the first formative period. As yet, as a rule, each nation is of necessity obliged to judge for itself in matters of vital importance between it and its neighbors, and actions must of necessity, where this is the case, be different from what they are where, as among private citizens, there is an outside force whose action is all-powerful and must be invoked in any crisis of importance. It is

the duty of wise statesmen, gifted with the power of looking ahead, to try to encourage and build up every movement which will substitute or tend to substitute some other agency for force in the settlement of international disputes. It is the duty of every honest statesman to try to guide the nation so that it shall not wrong any other nation. But as yet the great civilized peoples, if they are to be true to themselves and to the cause of humanity and civilization, must keep ever in mind that in the last resort they must possess both the will and the power to resent wrong-doing from others. The men who sanely believe in a lofty morality preach righteousness; but they do not preach weakness, whether among private citizens or among nations. We believe that our ideals should be high, but not so high as to make it impossible measurably to realize them. We sincerely and earnestly believe in peace; but if peace and justice conflict, we scorn the man who would not stand for justice though the whole world came in arms against him.

And now, my hosts, a word in parting. You and I belong to the only two republics among the great powers of the world. The ancient friendship between France and the United States has been, on the whole, a sincere and disinterested friendship. A calamity to you would be a sorrow to us. But it would be more than that. In the seething turmoil of the history of humanity certain nations stand out as possessing a peculiar power or charm, some special gift of beauty or wisdom or strength, which puts them among the immortals, which makes them rank forever with the leaders of mankind. France is one of these nations. For her to sink would be a loss to all the world. There are certain lessons of brilliance and of generous gallantry that she can teach better than any of her sister nations. When the French

peasantry sang of Malbrook, it was to tell how the soul of this warrior-foe took flight upward through the laurels he had won. Nearly seven centuries ago, Froissart, writing of a time of dire disaster, said that the realm of France was never so stricken that there were not left men who would valiantly fight for it. You have had a great past. I believe that you will have a great future. Long may you carry yourselves proudly as citizens of a nation which bears a leading part in the teaching and uplifting of mankind.

{ *Citizenship in a Republic*, Speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23, 1910 }

Why do I like to Write? by Jadeon Smith

[**Vancouver**] Writing is essential for everyone; you must learn writing whether you like it or not. If you get a good job, then you will have to get used to writing because you do it every day. When you begin writing; it may be very tough or very easy. When I first started, it was tough, but my mom kept saying that I must write. A year passed, it started to get easier and easier, now I don't even need to think, words just pop out of my head. Most students in my class aren't that good at writing because they barely write, and our teacher gives us easy topics to write about ...like 'how to wash your hands.'

If you want to get good at writing, you must write every day. The way I got more comfortable with writing was by going to a speech class for one whole year. I thought it was hard because I had to write three paragraphs while I was in grade two. To me, that sounded like a lot. I quit that class after one year and didn't get another writing lesson until almost a year after. I had forgotten how to write, but luckily, I still remembered some important things. I had that writing teacher since grade four, but I can't go to see her anymore because of the Coronavirus. Writing was a nightmare for me a few years ago, but now it seems kind of fun because can relax, write whatever I want and write as much as I want.

When I write, I feel relaxed. I feel relaxed because I don't have to think. When I think, my brain gets tired and it gives me a headache or I just want to sleep. When I write, I don't really have to think, and there are no rules to

like how many words I can write. I can write as many words as I want. When writing you don't have to do anything else ... you just write and that's it. When I feel like I need more ideas, I can take a break and come back with a handful of ideas on what to write about. Sometimes though, if I don't have enough time to write, my brain starts to get stressed and what I write isn't as good. That is the reason why I like to start at least a few days before the deadline. Usually I take breaks between paragraphs so my brain can refresh. I also feel relaxed because sometimes I don't sleep enough so it feels good to be relaxed. Writing is one of my top ten ways to relax.

When I write, I get to write whatever I want. Nobody can tell what I have to write about. I can write a story, a journal, and many other things that I want to write. My stories can have any ending, happy or sad. I can make it so that a hero saves the day, or the villain destroys the world. I can also write about any topic; it doesn't just have to be about a hero or a villain. I could also write about somebody's life or my own life. I could also write in a journal; nobody can boss me around. If you want to have fun, write whatever you want to write.

When you are writing, there is no limit about how much you can write. You can just let all your thoughts flow out, so you don't have to decide what words to use to make it exactly a certain amount of words. When you can write as many words as you want, writing becomes more fun and easier. I like writing because of that rule, you don't have to squeeze a certain amount of words into your essay. I like to write as much as I want so I can fill as much information as possible. Sometimes I write a lot of words, sometimes,

I don't write as much. Sometimes it gets a little tricky because I worry I write too much ... but that's the fun of writing, you can write as much as you want.

I like writing, but sometimes it is not as fun with some certain topics. Most of the time, I don't mind people choosing a topic for me to write about because I can't think of one, but sometimes ... I'd rather choose the topic myself. If you are writing and find out that you don't really have much to write about, you can keep thinking, take a break, or switch topics. If you are assigned a topic, then you probably can't change it, but if you're just writing for fun, you can switch topics. I do that when I write, for it makes writing more enjoyable and fun.

Why I Don't Like to Write by Andy Zhu

[**Vancouver**] From a very early age, perhaps the age of four or five, I always hear a voice within my head telling me that I shouldn't be a writer. Between the ages of about seven to eight, I discovered that that voice was right, I shouldn't be a writer.

When I was in grade one back in China, I was very behind the curriculum somehow. I knew absolutely nothing about how to read and write Chinese characters. However, most of my classmates not only knew how to write Chinese, but wrote a three hundred word essay, probably because their parents sent them to pre-school and forced them to learn at a young age. Since I couldn't write, the teacher thought I was a somewhat mentally disordered student and was calling my mom to tell her the fact that I couldn't write. After receiving the call, my mom was very mad, not mad at me though, but mad at the teacher because she thought that it should be the teacher's responsibility to teach me how to read and write, cause overall it was still grade one!

After a few months into grade one, the teacher told us to match sentences together even though most of my classmates already knew how to do that. I did my best to match those fragments and hoped for the best after I handed it in. After the teacher was done marking, she said that this class was not bad, and obviously since my classmates already knew how to do them. However, she didn't stop yet, she mentioned to the class that there was a student who was either making a joke about this exercise or just completely didn't know

how to match those words. The teacher then publicly embarrassed that student by reading out two sentences that he formed out loud: Monkeys got on to work; Teacher returned to the tree branch. I was laughing hard because I couldn't imagine why somebody would make that kind of joke on a quiz. Then suddenly, the teacher announced my name and asked me why I made that joke, and I was totally shocked because I couldn't believe that it was me! I stumbled for a minute and said that I seriously didn't know that I did it. Everybody laughed at me and I just felt so embarrassed. Therefore grade one was a terrible experience for me. Although I am pretty sure I didn't have the same IQ as Forrest Gump, I certainly felt like I was a Forrest Gump in my school.

A year later, I was in grade two, and I had worked hard to catch up with writing stuff. I learned quite a few characters at my disposal, and was able to write simple essays. Surprisingly, I found myself pretty good at writing essays, and often get good marks on them. I was confused back then why I suddenly became so good of an essay writer, and now when I look back, it is probably because of my creativity and humor that gave the teacher joy to read my essays. This day, my teacher introduced to us a new kind of question where you were asked to write a story based on the pictures provided. The teacher handed us the question, and there are three pictures. The first one on how a pig was having fun swimming in mud. The second being how all the other animals abandoned the pig because of the pig being so dirty. The third picture shows that the pig is smiling and enjoying its time. At first, I was a bit questioned about how I should connect these pictures, but I was able to get on track quickly. I realised that the most straightforward

implementation of the pictures is that because the pig changed its hobby of swimming in mud, the pig became friends with those other animals. However, I don't want to make my story turn out to be the same as others, and instead, this is my implementation of the story: the pig was very sad about the fact that nobody want to play with him, but another pig appeared and became friend with the other pig, and both pigs started to enjoy their time in the mud, and live a happy life. After the teacher was done marking the stories, she handed it back to us. Just when I thought I was going to achieve a good mark, I failed! I went up and asked the teacher why I failed, and the teacher said that this story should be about the pig fixing its hobby of swimming in mud and making new friends. And because I didn't write it that way, I deserve to fail. I was frustrated and I told the teacher that animals have certain hobbies that just couldn't be changed, dogs cannot stop themselves from eating poop, and pigs cannot stop themselves from swimming in mud. We should embrace our identity and accept who we are. The teacher then responded angrily that I have no right to backtalk to her, and I either get a zero or rewrite my story. This assignment not only made me mad, but destroyed my will to become a good writer.

Overall, to this day, every single time I write, those terrible experiences would come chasing after me, making me scared. That is why I don't like to write.

What does Spring Mean to Me? by Jadeon Smith

[**Vancouver**] For some people, Spring may be fun or not fun. The opinion is different for different people. Maybe some people enjoy Spring because their birthday may be in Spring, or perhaps because of Spring-Break or April Fool's day. Maybe some people aren't fond of Spring because Spring-Break is shorter than Summer-Break.

For me, I don't have a least favourite season, but my favourite is Winter because I get to ski a lot of the time. Most of the time when I go skiing, I get to go to Whistler for a few days. I also like Winter because of Christmas which means I get to have a good dinner. Spring to me can be fun because sometimes I get to go skiing with my friends and there is a Spring-Break and Fall doesn't have a Fall-Break. This Spring though, won't be as enjoyable because of the Coronavirus. School is closed, and we are forced to stay indoors. If I must stay indoors, my mom will intentionally find me a lot of work for me to do and it will be a horrible Spring.

This Spring, my mom signed me up for a lot of online classes, she even tried to find me tons of websites that teach you things like math, grammar and coding. Luckily, she forgot all about those websites and doesn't ask me to do them anymore ... at least for now she doesn't. The only good things about this Spring is that Spring-Break has extended a week so far. The other good thing is when school almost starts in the morning, I don't have to get up early and ask my mom to speed drive me to school. Instead of getting up early, I can only need to get up near 9:00 a.m. and just turn on a computer,

and not have my mom drive me at the speed of light for about 20 minutes to school and have to eat quickly in the car.

Usually during Spring, I would go skiing with my friends. When going skiing, we would sometimes go to Whistler for a few days and stay in a hotel. When we were not skiing, we were either in the hotel talking, watching TV or eating snacks. We would always go to restaurants that have delicious food. We even went to this place called *Cow's Ice Cream*. Their ice cream is also very good. During Spring, I also got to play badminton more often with my friends and we would have a lot of fun. Most of the time, my friends weren't busy with anything, so we had a lot of time to have fun with each other.

This Spring, I wish I could just relax. I wish I could do whatever I wanted, I would sit and daydream forever and eat whatever I wanted. I could also play cards with myself, watch TV or sleep. I want to invite some of my friends to my house and watch interesting movies or play video games like Minecraft all day. I wish I could sit down, forget everything in my life and read cool books. I also wish I could go skiing at Whistler for as long as I want, have lots of fun and eat *Cow's Ice Cream* every day. Unfortunately, I can't do that because of the danger of Coronavirus.

This Spring would have been a nice and fun Spring if it hadn't been for the evil Coronavirus. People could have had lots of parties every day and I could have gone to Whistler with my friend and have a party with my other friend.

Spring this year should have been a wonderful time, but since everyone is worried, nobody dares to have any fun.

Psyche and Cupid by Apuleius

{ A modern day translation and transcription from Latin }

Eons ago, through destiny that even rules the Gods, once upon a time love gave an immortal heart to a mortal maiden. And this is how this marvel came to pass.

There was a king who had three beautiful daughters. The two eldest married renown princes; but young Psyche was so radiant that no suitor thought themselves worthy of her. People thronged to see her pass through the city, and sang hymns in her praise, while strangers believed her to be the very goddess of beauty herself.

Peering down from Heaven above this mortal praise angered the immortal Goddess Venus. Venus resolved to cast down her Earthly rival, so she called forth her son Cupid, the harbinger of Love, and bade him sharpen his amorous arrows. Cupid is an archer more dreaded than Apollo, for while Apollo's arrows may swiftly bring an end to your life, Cupid's golden arrows may pain your heart with endless joy or sorrow if you are touched by his golden arrow.

"Come, my son," said Venus. "There is a mortal maid who robs me of my Earthly honors. Avenge your mother. Prick this precious maid, and let Psyche fall in love with some churlish creature, cruel in the eyes of mortal men."

Invisibly Cupid made ready his weapons, and set down to Earth. At that moment Psyche was asleep in her bedchamber; he laid bare her breast and touched her heart with his golden arrow of Love. Feeling the pang she opened her eyes so suddenly that he started (forgetting that he was invisible), and pricked himself with the same arrow. Heedless of his own hurt, and moved deeply by Psyche's beauty, his heart softened, and he hastened to undo his misdeed. Back to her dream the princess went, unmoved by any thought of love. But Cupid, now very much in love with Psyche, returned to the heavenly place saying not a word of what had passed.

Venus waited; then, seeing that Psyche's heart had somehow escaped love, figured that Cupid's arrow had failed to hit its mark. In spite Venus set a malevolent curse upon the maiden. From that time, beautiful as Psyche was, not a suitor came to court her; and her parents, who desired to see her as a queen, married asked an Oracle for his counsel. He explained what had happened and also said the city state and its citizens who had praised Psyche shall also be harmed.

Solemnly the Oracle said: "Your princess daughter Psyche shall never wed a mere mortal. She shall be given to one who shall overcome the gods, and pains for her up above."

At this terrible utterance Psyche's parents were half distraught, and once told the people gave themselves up to grief at the fate in store for their beloved princess. Psyche alone bowed to her destiny. "I have angered Venus

unwittingly,” she said, “and all for the sake of me, heedless maiden that I am! Give me up, therefore, dear father and mother. If I atone, it may be that the city will prosper once more.”

So she besought them, until, after many unavailing pleadings, the parents consented; and with a great company of people they led Psyche up the mountain—as an offering to the monster of whom the Oracle had spoken—and left her there alone.

Full of courage, yet in a secret agony of grief she watched her kindred and her people wind down the mountain-path, too sad to look back, until they were lost to sight. Then, indeed, she wept, but a sudden breeze drew near, dried her tears, and caressed her hair, seeming to murmur comfort. In truth, it was Zephyr, the kindly West Wind, come to befriend her; and as she took heart, feeling some benignant presence, he lifted her in his arms, and carried her on wings as even as a seagull’s over the crest of the fateful mountain and into a valley below. There he left her, resting on a bank of hospitable grass, and there the princess fell asleep.

When she awoke, it was near sunset. She looked about her for some sign of the monster’s approach; she wondered, then, if her grievous, trial had been but a dream. Near by she saw a sheltering forest, whose young trees, seemed to beckon as one maid beckons to another; and eager for the protection of the dryads, she went thither.

The call of running waters drew her farther and farther, till she came out upon an open place, where there was a wide pool. A fountain fluttered gladly in the midst of it, and beyond there stretched a white palace wonderful to see. Coaxed by the bright promise of the place, she drew near, and, seeing no one, entered softly. It was all kinglier than her father's home, and as she stood in wonder and awe, soft airs stirred about her. Little by little the silence grew murmurous like the woods, and one voice, sweeter than the rest, took words. "All that you see is yours, gentle high princess," it said. "Fear nothing; only command us, for we are here to serve you."

Full of amazement and delight, Psyche followed the voice from hall to hall, and through the lordly rooms, beautiful with everything that could delight a young princess. No pleasant thing was lacking. There was even a pool, brightly tiled and fed with running waters where she bathed her weary limbs; and after she had put on the new and beautiful raiment that lay ready for her, she sat down to break her fast, waited upon and sung to by the unseen spirits.

Surely he whom the Oracle had called her husband was no monster, but some beneficent power, invisible like all the rest. When daylight waned he came, and his voice, the beautiful voice of a god, inspired her to trust her strange destiny and to look and long for his return. Often she begged him to stay with her through the day, that she might see his face; but this he would not grant.

“Never doubt me, dearest Psyche,” said he. “Perhaps you would fear if you saw me, and love is all I ask. There is a necessity that keeps me hidden now. Only believe.”

So for many days Psyche was content; but when she grew used to happiness, she thought once more of her parents mourning her as lost, and of her sisters who shared the lot of mortals while she lived as a goddess. One night she told her husband of these regrets, and begged that her sisters at least might come to see her. He sighed, but did not refuse.

“Zephyr shall bring them hither,” said he. And on the following morning, swift as a bird, the West Wind came over the crest of the high mountain and down into the enchanted valley, bearing her two sisters.

They greeted Psyche with joy and amazement, hardly knowing how they had come hither. But when this fairest of the sisters led them through her palace and showed them all the treasures that were hers, envy grew in their hearts and choked their old love. Even while they sat at feast with her, they grew more and more bitter; and hoping to find some little flaw in her good fortune, they asked a thousand questions.

“Where is your husband?” said they. “And why is he not here with you?”

“Ah,” stammered Psyche. “All the day long—he is gone, hunting upon the mountains.”

“But what does he look like?” they asked; and Psyche could find no answer.

When they learned that she had never seen him, they laughed her faith to scorn.

“Poor Psyche,” they said. “You are walking in a dream. Wake, before it is too late. Have you forgotten what the Oracle decreed,—that you were destined for a dreadful creature, the fear of gods and men? And are you deceived by this show of kindness? We have come to warn you. The people told us, as we came over the mountain, that your husband is a dragon, who feeds you well for the present, that he may feast the better some day soon. What is it that you trust? Good words! But only take a dagger some night, and when the monster is asleep go, light a lamp, and look at him. You can put him to death easily, and all his riches will be yours—and ours.”

Psyche heard this wicked plan with horror. Nevertheless, after her sisters were gone, she brooded over what they had said, not seeing their evil intent; and she came to find some wisdom in their words. Little by little, suspicion ate, like a moth, into her lovely mind; and at nightfall, in shame and fear, she hid a lamp and a dagger in her chamber. Towards midnight, when her husband was fast asleep, up she rose, hardly daring to breathe; and coming softly to his side, she uncovered the lamp to see some horror.

But there the youngest of the gods lay sleeping,—most beautiful, most irresistible of all immortals. His hair shone golden as the sun, his face was

radiant as dear Springtime, and from his shoulders sprang two rainbow wings.

Poor Psyche was overcome with self-reproach. As she leaned towards him, filled with worship, her trembling hands held the lamp ill, and some burning oil fell upon Love's shoulder and awakened him.

He opened his eyes, to see at once his bride and the dark suspicion in her heart.

“O doubting Psyche,” he exclaimed with sudden grief,—and then he flew away, out of the window.

Wild with sorrow, Psyche tried to follow, but she fell to the ground instead. When she recovered her senses, she stared about her. She was alone, and the place was beautiful no longer. Garden and palace had vanished with Love.

Over mountains and valleys Psyche journeyed alone until she came to the city where her two envious sisters lived with the princes whom they had married. She stayed with them only long enough to tell the story of her unbelief and its penalty. Then she set out again to search for Love.

As she wandered one day, travel-worn but not hopeless, she saw a lofty palace on a hill near by, and she turned her steps thither. The place seemed deserted. Within the hall she saw no human being,—only heaps of grain, loose ears of corn half torn from the husk, wheat, and barley, alike scattered

in confusion on the floor. Without delay, she set to work binding the sheaves together and gathering the scattered ears of corn in seemly wise, as a princess would wish to see them. While she was in the midst of her task, a voice startled her, and she looked up to behold Demeter herself, the goddess of the harvest, smiling upon her with good will.

“Dear Psyche,” said Demeter, “you are worthy of happiness, and you may find it yet. But since you have displeased Venus, go to her and ask her favour. Perhaps your patience will win her pardon.”

These motherly words gave Psyche heart, and she reverently took leave of the goddess and set out for the temple of Venus. Most humbly she offered up her prayer, but Venus could not look at her earthly beauty without anger.

“Vain girl,” said she, “perhaps you have come to make amends for the wound you dealt your husband; you shall do so. Such clever people can always find work!”

Then she led Psyche into a great chamber heaped high with mingled grain, beans, and lintels (the food of her doves), and bade her separate them all and have them ready in seemly fashion by night. Heracles would have been helpless before such a vexatious task; and poor Psyche, left alone in this desert of grain, had not courage to begin. But even as she sat there, a moving thread of black crawled across the floor from a crevice in the wall; and bending nearer, she saw that a great army of ants in columns had come to her aid. The zealous little creatures worked in swarms, with such industry

over the work they like best, that, when Venus came at night, she found the task completed.

“Deceitful girl,” she cried, shaking the roses out of her hair with impatience, “this is my son’s work, not yours. But he will soon forget you. Eat this black bread if you are hungry and refresh your dull mind with sleep. Tomorrow you will need more wit.”

Psyche wondered what new misfortune could be in store for her. But when morning came, Venus led her to the brink of a river, and, pointing to the wood across the water, said, “Go now to yonder grove where the sheep with the golden fleece are wont to browse. Bring me a golden lock from every one of them, or you must go your ways and never come back again.”

This seemed not difficult, and Psyche obediently bade the goddess farewell, and stepped into the water, ready to wade across. But as Venus disappeared, the reeds sang louder and the nymphs of the river, looking up sweetly, blew bubbles to the surface and murmured: “Nay, nay, have a care, Psyche. This flock has not the gentle ways of sheep. While the sun burns aloft, they are themselves as fierce as flame; but when the shadows are long, they go to rest and sleep, under the trees; and you may cross the river without fear and pick the golden fleece off the briers in the pasture.”

Thanking the water-creatures, Psyche sat down to rest near them, and when the time came, she crossed in safety and followed their counsel. By twilight she returned to Venus with her arms full of shining fleece.

“No mortal wit did this,” said Venus angrily. “But if you care to prove your readiness, go now, with this little box, down to Proserpina and ask her to enclose in it some of her beauty, for I have grown pale in caring for my wounded son.”

“It needed not the last taunt to sadden Psyche. She knew that it was not for mortals to go into Hades and return alive; and feeling that Love had forsaken her, she was minded to accept her doom as soon as might be.

But even as she hastened towards the descent, another friendly voice detained her. “Stay, Psyche, I know your grief. Only give ear and you shall learn a safe way through all these trials.” And the voice went on to tell her how one might avoid all the dangers of Hades and come out unscathed. (But such a secret could not pass from mouth to mouth, with the rest of the story.)

“And be sure,” added the voice, “when Proserpina has returned the box, not to open it, however much you may long to do so.”

Psyche gave heed, and by this device, whatever it was, she found her way into Hades safely, and made her errand known to Proserpina, and was soon in the upper world again, wearied but hopeful.

“Surely Love has not forgotten me,” she said. “But humbled as I am and worn with toil, how shall I ever please him? Venus can never need all the beauty in this casket; and since I use it for Love’s sake, it must be right to

take some.” So saying, she opened the box, headless as Pandora! The spells and potions of Hades are not for mortal maids, and no sooner had she inhaled the strange aroma than she fell down like one dead, quite overcome.

But it happened that Love himself was recovered from his wound, and he had secretly fled from his chamber to seek out and rescue Psyche. He found her lying by the wayside; he gathered into the casket what remained of the philter, and awoke his beloved.

“Take comfort,” he said, smiling. “Return to our mother and do her bidding till I come again.”

Away he flew; and while Psyche went cheerily homeward, he hastened up to Olympus, where all the gods sat feasting, and begged them to intercede for him with his angry mother.

They heard his story and their hearts were touched. Zeus himself coaxed Venus with kind words till at last she relented, and remembered that anger hurt her beauty, and smiled once more. All the younger gods were for welcoming Psyche at once, and Hermes was sent to bring her hither. The maiden came, a shy newcomer among these bright creatures. She took the cup that Hebe held out to her, drank the divine ambrosia, and became immortal.

Light came to her face like moon rise, two radiant wings sprang from her shoulders; and even as a butterfly bursts from its dull cocoon, so the human Psyche blossomed into immortality.

Love took her by the hand, and they were never parted any more.

Too Bad about Saint-Exupéry by Constance Babington-Smith

“The French boys with the 23rd squadron are tickled to death with the idea of going over to France,” They’ve sure taken it to heart,” and added thoughtfully, “too bad about Saint-Exupéry.” It had been a serious responsibility having a world-famous author as one of your pilots. Polifka’s usually sunny face was clouded.

* * *

In the context of Allied photographic reconnaissance, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, or “Saint-Expyr” as the American called him, was a problematic French celebrity who insisted on flying [photoreconnaissance] Lightnings when he was much too old and absent-minded. But the record of Saint-Exupéry’s persistent devotion to photographic flying is something so unique that it must be traced from its beginning to its end aside from the main course of events.

His first taste of it had been during the winter of 1939, when Group 2-33 of the French Air Force was helping to keep watch on the Rhineland. When the German offensive came in May 1940, the Group kept numbly on with its reconnaissance during the retreat, and was struggling to operate from Orly when on May 23rd Saint-Exupéry made the flight over Arras which was to be the inspiration for his famous book.

When the remnants of the Group finally reached Algiers Saint-Exupéry was with them, and then he left the Air Force and soon afterwards went to live in New York. There he wrote *Flight to Arras*, and it was published early in 1942. Immediately it was a best-seller and “Saint-Ex” became a literary lion. Then he suddenly heard that Group 2-33 was coming to life again. It was to be adopted by the Americans in North Africa.

At once he longed to be back with them, and he managed to get to Algiers just before Tunis fell. String-pulling was needed before he was allowed to fly Lightnings, for he was then 43 – twenty years older than most of the photographic pilots. Although he had flown over 6,000 hours as an airline pilot, Saint-Exupéry was not in fact very good at flying Lightnings, and he admitted as much. But he was still utterly determined to keep on, and on July 27th, 1943, he took off from La Marsa on his first operational sortie over southern France. After photographing his targets he was on his way back when he was drawn down as by a magnet to have a look at a little town near the coast: Agay, his sister’s home. He returned in a mood of exaltation, exclaiming: “You cannot imagine what it feels like to see one’s country again!”

Only five days later, however, he was in the depths of despair. After a minor mishap (he overshot the runway at La Marsa and finished up in a vineyard with a damaged propeller and wing) he was told he would have to be grounded.

For eight miserable months Saint-Exupéry lived in Algiers, with no proper job and too unhappy and nervy to write. Then in the spring of 1944 his old friend General Chassin arranged for have him attached to his own bomber squadron. But Saint-Exupéry begged Chassin to get him back into photographic reconnaissance.

By this time General Eaker was in command of the Mediterranean air forces; so it was to Eaker that the two Frenchmen appealed, and the American General unwillingly agreed to allow Saint-Exupéry five more missions with his old unit. In mid-May he rejoined it joyfully, at Alghero in Sardinia, and the next two months were blissfully happy. During this time Saint-Exupéry set down some of his last impressions of photographic reconnaissance:

“Once again I am experiencing the joys of high-altitude flights. They are like a diver’s plunges into the depths of the sea: one enters forbidden territory, decked out in barbarous equipment, encased in a framework of dials and instruments and gauges; and high above one’s country one breathes oxygen manufactured in the United States. The air of New York in the skies of France – isn’t it odd? At the controls of this light, fleet monster, this Lightning P-38, there is no feeling of movement, but, rather, of being fixed and immobile at one and the same moment, over a whole continent.

The photographs one brings back are submitted to stereoscopic analysis, as organisms are examined under a microscope; the interpreters of these photographs work exactly like the bacteriologists.

They seek on the vulnerable body of France traces of the virus that devours her. One can die from the effects of these enemy strongholds and depots and convoys which, under the lens, appear like tiny bacilli.

And then these hours of poignant meditation as one flies over France – so near yet so far. One feels separated from her as though by centuries. All one's tender memories and associations, indeed one's very *raison d'être*, are to be found there, stretched out, as it were, 35,000 feet below, in the clear glint of the sun; and yet, more inaccessible than the treasures of the Pharaohs under the glass-cases of a museum."

By the first week of July 1944, when his unit moved to Borgo in Corsica, he had already exceeded his five flights. He was having a whole series of minor accidents and amazing escapes, and his squadron commander, who was gravely concerned about him, decided to confide to him the date of the landings, which would mean that he could no longer fly over enemy territory. But he begged for just one more flight, and as it was "Saint-Ex" he got his way. The secret date was not mentioned. Early on July 31st he took off on that "one more" flight – for cover of Annecy and Grenoble – the flight from which he never returned.

{Excerpt from: *Evidence in Camera*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1958}

By Way of Prologue by Samuel Putnam

There are times when it comes back to me like a kind of Salvador Dali nightmare. Something occurs to bring it back. It may be a sleepless night when the latest Crime Club selection has failed to do its work and the mind starts traveling in the direction of the past. It may be something else: a clipping in my scrapbook; a letter, already showing signs of age, that I have come upon in my files and that gives me somewhat the feeling of encountering a ghost; a news item in the papers; the notice of a book that has been published by an old Left Bank acquaintance; a painting exhibit in Fifty-seventh Street that recalls the raucous and rowdier nights in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés quarter and the boulevard du Montparnasse.

It may be a chance meeting at a Manhattan cocktail party, in a Greenwich Village tavern, or along Fifth Avenue, with someone whom I had last seen in that blaring era, the late 'twenties, when, over our *fines-à-l'eau* at Jimmy the Barman's we had adjourned a violent discussion – what was it about, anyway? Fernand Léger and machine-age art? James Joyce and the interior monologue? Transition and the “*Revolution of the Word*”? What? Self-consciously, laughingly, we try to remember. Whatever it was, it was quite important at the time, a matter of vital importance to those ‘expatriates,’ those “exiles,” who had fled the America of Harding and Coolidge and the Bible Belt, of Sinclair Lewis, James Branch Cabell, and Anita Loos, precisely in order that they might be able to devote themselves to such questions as these.

I pick up a newspaper: Ezra Pound on trial for treason as psychiatrists wrangle over his degree of sanity – I think of my first glimpse of Ezra, his Byronic sport shirt and straw-colored beard, filling the doorway of our cramped little apartment in the rue Delambre, around the corner from the café du Dôme. I have visions of him lying on his sunny terrace at Rapallo, composing his *Cantos* ...

Willy Seabrook a suicide – there was that evening when he came to my place and insisted that we go out in search of a cannibalistic meal, a dinner of human flesh, which he assured me was to be found in Paris ...

I open the New York Times to the Sunday art page, and a headline brings me to the news that Joseph Stella, one of the first, fighting modernists, is dead. At once I am back in his Montparnasse studio, posing for my portrait throughout the long afternoon, listening to his pungent comments. Or we are at the entrance of the Dôme on a certain New Year's morning as Joe and another painter wage a memorable duel with their walking sticks.

Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein – I read their death notices, one after another, as the years go by, and each brings a throng of memories. Before she died, I have seen Miss Stein become, if not a best-seller, a fair-selling success, whose prose the ordinary citizen no longer finds too strange. Hemingway, almost old-hat now to the younger ones, commutes from his home in Havana to the Stork Club, or so the gossip-columnists tell me ... Andre Gide remains, however, as does Jean Cocteau (does he still smoke the opium pipe?); after being an underserved cloud for a while, they are seen to

be carrying on still the great tradition that they represent; they are among the few recognizable landmarks in the after-war scene, where Jean-Paul Sartre and his Existentialists and other new men and movements hold the center of the stage.

A generation is passing, there can be no doubt of that, one that made literary and art history in its day. A generation tragic and deeply troubled as were few that had gone before. And it was one that, whether Continental or American, found its home in Paris, immemorial city of refuge for the outcast and the rebel. In Paris, and on Paris' historic Left Bank, where for the past thousand years, ever since the time of Charlemagne, people have gathered to think and talk, to wrangle over intellectual and spiritual matters, and, on more than one occasion, to die for their beliefs.

The story of this generation is not Europe's alone; it forms a part of America's annals, both social and cultural. Never before in history had there been such a mass migration of writers and artists from any land to a foreign shore. For a decade and more, Paris was a good deal nearer than New York or Chicago to being the literary capital of the United States, as far as earnest and significant writing was concerned. It was the "Work in Progress" (later to become *Finnegan's Wake*) by the Irish Joyce, it was *Tender Buttons* and *The Sun Also Rises*, over against *Babbitt* and *Jurgen* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. And who today can doubt which it was, on the whole, the "exiles" or the stay-at-homes, who contributed most in the way of positive direction to American letters of the past two decades?

It was a noisy, sensation-loving epoch, and these young Americans of the Rive Gauche had their full share of publicity, sought and unsought. Their frequent weird-seeming works and aesthetic “revolutions” created a furor such as the wildest Surrealist scarcely could hope to achieve today, and they were a fair target for the newspaper columnist and quipster even as they rapidly became collector’s items. Meanwhile, in this period of prohibition gin and the “wild party” at home in America, lurid tales were told of the life they led in the general vicinity of the café du Dôme and the café Select, some of which were exaggerated while others fell short of the truth.

It is really surprising that no one has set this whole story down in print, for it is one that, for the sake of the record, ought to be preserved – both the literary-artistic and the human side of it. We have heard much of the “lost generation” that resulted from the disorientation, not to say chaos, that followed World War I; and now that we are in the trough of World War II, it may be worth our while to study the causes, manifestation, and the consequences of the expatriate movement of the 1920’s. In his *Exile’s Return* (published in 1934), Malcolm Cowley has made an extremely valuable contribution to the chronicle, but has given us only a partial and, by intent a highly personalized, view, covering chiefly the beginnings of the movement in the early ‘twenties. My report may perhaps supplement the earlier, incomplete ones, inasmuch as it deals largely with the period from 1926 to 1933, the years during which, whatever the quality of the émigrés as compared with their predecessors, the bulk of the migration came.

This is not, then, just another book about Paris. For the past hundred years, literally hundreds of books have been written, and there would seem little point in adding to their number, unless one can tell as unusual and charming a story as Elliot Paul has told in *The Last Time I Saw Paris*. (Paul, by the way, could well have been the historian of the exile decade, had he chosen). This is, rather, a book about a generation in *Paris*. That it would have been the same generation anywhere else is inconceivable; for the city by the Seine inevitably colored its life and work and shaped its destiny. Paris always does that. There is no such thing as a Paris that everyone knows, that may be captured and put into a guidebook or a volume of whimsical reminiscences, for the benefit of the tourist or curiosity-seeker. It is always somebody's Paris. It has always been and always will be.

Accordingly, the present work will of necessity be in good part autobiographical, reflecting the formative period of my life and the Paris that I saw through my own eyes and those of my contemporaries. It is essentially the story of my youth, and I can only hope that too much of tired and elderly wisdom will not have crept into the telling – only so much as may be needed to illuminate the moral of the end. The Paris that we knew was not the “gay Paree” of light-opera tradition. It was sometimes *happy*, more often sad; for the gaiety, the light-heartedness, of youth is vastly overestimated, and while we may have been a roistering lot, we were by no means always as carefree as we seemed. Whatever else it may have been, Paris – our Paris – was full of life and zest and color, as well as weariness, disillusionment, and despair; and it is this Paris that I have tried to portray here. The Paris that was our

spiritual mistress, a wise and beautiful one, at a time when our own America, or so it seemed, had turned a strumpet.

When I think back, it is hard to know where to begin, and the pieces of a weird jigsaw puzzle start tumbling about my head, Alice in Wonderland fashion (for was not Alice a “precursor” of the Surrealists, as Louis Aragon used to maintain?). It is difficult to bring some realistic order out of it all. Perhaps the best way is to begin at the beginning: how and why we came to be there.

Excerpt from:

Paris was our Mistress: Memoirs of a Lost and Found Generation

1947

On the Essence of Laughter by Charles Baudelaire

I

I have no intention of writing a treatise on caricature: I simply want to acquaint the reader with certain reflections which have often occurred to me on the subject of this singular genre. These reflections had become a kind of obsession for me, and I wanted to get them off my chest. Nevertheless I have made every effort to impose some order, and thus to make their digestion more easy. This, then, is purely an artist's and a philosopher's article. No doubt a general history of caricature in its references to all the facts by which humanity has been stirred—facts political and religious, weighty or frivolous; facts relative to the disposition of the nation or to fashion—would be a glorious and important work. The task still remains to be done, for the essays which have been published up to the present are hardly more than raw materials. But I thought that this task should be divided. It is clear that a work on caricature, understood in this way, would be a history of facts, an immense gallery of anecdote. In caricature, far more than in the other branches of art, there are two sorts of works which are to be prized and commended for different and almost contrary reasons. One kind have value only by reason of the fact which they represent. No doubt they have a right to the attention of the historian, the archaeologist, and even the philosopher; they deserve to take their place in the national archives, in the biographical registers of human thought. Like the flysheets of journalism, they are swept out of sight by the same tireless breeze which supplies us with fresh ones. But the others—and it is with these that I want to concern myself

especially—contain a mysterious, lasting, eternal element, which recommends them to the attention of artists. What a curious thing, and one truly worthy of attention, is the introduction of this indefinable element of beauty, even in works which are intended to represent his proper ugliness—both moral and physical—to man! And what is no less mysterious is that this lamentable spectacle excites in him an undying and incorrigible mirth. Here, then, is the true subject of my article.

A doubt assails me. Should I reply with a formal demonstration to the kind of preliminary question which no doubt will be raised by certain spiteful pundits of solemnity charlatans of gravity, pedantic corpses which have emerged from the icy vaults of the *Institut* and have come again to the land of the living, like a band of miserly ghosts, to snatch a few coppers from the obliging administration? First of all, they would ask, is Caricature a genre? No, their cronies would reply. Caricature is not a genre. I have heard similar heresies ringing in my ears at academicians' dinners. It was these fine fellows who let the comedy of Robert Macaire slip past them without noticing any of its great moral and literary symptoms. [note: The character of Robert Macaire (in the play *L'Auberge des Adrets*) had been created by the actor Frederick Lemaitre, in the 1820s. Later Daumier developed the character in a famous series of caricatures.] If they had been contemporaries of Rabelais, they would have treated him as a base and uncouth buffoon. In truth, then, have we got to show that nothing at all that issues from man is frivolous in the eyes of a philosopher? Surely, at the very least, there will be that obscure and mysterious element which no philosophy has so far analyzed to its depths?

We are going to concern ourselves, then, with the essence of laughter and with the component elements of caricature. Later, perhaps, we shall examine some of the most remarkable works produced in this genre.

II

The Sage laughs not save in fear and trembling. From what authority-laden lips, from what completely orthodox pen, did this strange and striking maxim fall? Does it come to us from the Philosopher-King of Judea? Or should we attribute it to Joseph de Maistre, that soldier quickened with the Holy Spirit? I have a vague memory of having read it in one of his books, but given as a quotation, no doubt. Such severity of thought and style suits well with the majestic saintliness of Bossuet; but the elliptical turn of the thought and its quintessential refinement would lead me rather to attribute the honour to Bourdaloue, the relentless Christian psychologist. This singular maxim has kept recurring to my mind ever since I first conceived the idea of my article, and I wanted to get rid of it at the very start.

But come, let us analyze this curious proposition—

The Sage, that is to say he who is quickened with the spirit of Our Lord, he who has the divine formulary at his finger tips, does not abandon himself to laughter save in fear and trembling. The Sage trembles at the thought of having laughed; the Sage fears laughter, just as he fears the lustful shows of this world. He stops short on the brink of laughter, as on the brink of

temptation. There is, then, according to the Sage, a certain secret contradiction between his special nature as Sage and the primordial nature of laughter. In fact, to do no more than touch in passing upon memories which are more than solemn, I would point out—and this perfectly corroborates the officially Christian character of the maxim—that the Sage *par excellence*, the Word Incarnate, never laughed. [note: This suggests a line in a poem by Baudelaire's friend Gustave le Vavas seur, published in 1843. *Dieux joyeux, je vous hais. Jesus na jamais ri.*] In the eyes of One who has all knowledge and all power, the comic does not exist. And yet the Word Incarnate knew anger; He even knew tears.

Let us make a note of this, then. In the first place, here is an author—a Christian, without doubt—who considers it as a certain fact that the Sage takes a very good look before allowing himself to laugh, as though some residue of uneasiness and anxiety must still be left him. And secondly, the comic vanishes altogether from the point of view of absolute knowledge and power. Now, if we inverted the two propositions, it would result that laughter is generally the appanage of madmen, and that it always implies more or less of ignorance and weakness. I have no wish, however, to embark recklessly upon a theological ocean, for which I should without doubt be insufficiently equipped with compass or sails; I am content just to indicate these singular horizons to the reader—to point them out to him with my finger.

If you are prepared, then, to take the point of view of the orthodox mind, it is certain that human laughter is intimately linked with the accident of an

ancient Fall, of a debasement both physical and moral. Laughter and grief are expressed by the organs in which the command and the knowledge of good and evil reside—I mean the eyes and the mouth. In the earthly paradise—whether one supposes it as past or to come, a memory or a prophecy, in the sense of the theologians or of the socialists—in the earthly paradise, that is to say in the surroundings in which it seemed to man that all created things were good, joy did not find its dwelling in laughter. As no trouble afflicted him, man's countenance was simple and smooth, and the laughter which now shakes the nations never distorted the features of his face. Laughter and tears cannot make their appearance in the paradise of delights. They are both equally the children of woe, and they came because the body of enfeebled man lacked the strength to restrain them. [note: Philippe de Chennevieres, an early friend of Baudelaire's. He wrote a number of books, and had a distinguished career in the official world of art. The exact source of this idea has not been traced among his works.] From the point of view of my Christian philosopher, the laugh on his lips is a sign of just as great a misery as the tears in his eyes. The Being who sought to multiply his own image has in no wise put the teeth of the lion into the mouth of man yet man rends with his laughter; nor all the seductive cunning of the serpent into his eyes—yet he beguiles with his tears. Observe also that it is with his tears that man washes the afflictions of man, and that it is with his laughter that sometimes he soothes and charms his heart; for the phenomena engendered by the Fall will become the means of redemption.

May I be permitted a poetic hypothesis in order to help me prove the accuracy of these assertions, which otherwise many people may find tainted

with the a priori of mysticism? Since the comic is a damnable element, and one of diabolic origin, let us try to imagine before us a soul absolutely pristine and fresh, so to speak, from the hands of Nature. For our example let us take the great and typical figure of Virginie, who perfectly symbolizes absolute purity and naiveté. [note: From Bemardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*] Virginie arrives in Paris still bathed in sea-mists and gilded by the tropic sun, her eyes full of great primitive images of waves, mountains and forests. Here she falls into the midst of a turbulent, overflowing and mephitic civilization, all imbued as she is with the pure and rich scents of the East. She is linked to humanity both by her birth and her love, by her mother and her lover, her Paul, who is as angelic as she and whose sex knows no distinction from hers, so to speak, in the unquenched ardors of a love which is unaware of itself. God she has known in the church of *Les Pamplemousses*—a. modest and mean little church, and in the vastness of the indescribable tropic sky and the immortal music of the forests and the torrents. Certainly Virginie is a noble intelligence; but a few images and a few memories suffice her, just as a few books suffice the Sage. Now one day by chance, in all innocence, at the Palais-Royal, at a glazier's window, on a table, in a public place, Virginie's eye falls upon—a caricature! a caricature all very tempting for us, full-blown with gall and spite, just such as a shrewd and bored civilization knows how to make them. Let us suppose some broad buffoonery of the prizing, some British enormity, full of clotted blood and spiced with a monstrous '*Goddam!*' or two: or, if this is more to the taste of your curious imagination, let us suppose before the eye of our virginal Virginie some charming and enticing morsel of lubricity, a Gavarni of her times, and one of the best—some insulting satire against the follies of the

court, some plastic diatribe against the Parc-aux-Cerfs, [note: Louis XV's private brothel at Versailles.] the vile activities of a great favourite, or the nocturnal escapades of the proverbial *Autrichienne* [note: Marie Antoinette]. Caricature is a double thing; it is both drawing and idea—the drawing violent, the idea caustic and veiled. And a network of such elements gives trouble to a simple mind which is accustomed to understand by intuition things as simple as itself. Virginie has glimpsed; now she gazes. Why? She is gazing at the unknown. Nevertheless she hardly understands either what it means or what it is for. And yet, do you observe that sudden folding of the wings, that shudder of a soul that veils herself and wants to draw back? The angel has sensed that there is offence in it. And in truth, I tell you, whether she has understood it or not, she will be left with some strange element of uneasiness—something which resembles fear. No doubt, if Virginie remains in Paris and knowledge comes to her, laughter will come too: we shall see why. But for the moment, in our capacity as analysts and critics who would certainly not dare to assert that our intelligence is superior to that of Virginie, let us simply record the fear and the suffering of the immaculate angel brought face to face with caricature.

III

If you wished to demonstrate that the comic is one of the clearest tokens of the Satanic in man, one of the numerous pips contained in the symbolic apple, it would be enough to draw attention to the unanimous agreement of physiologists of laughter on the primary ground of this monstrous phenomenon. Nevertheless their discovery is not very profound and hardly

goes very far. Laughter, they say, comes from superiority. I should not be surprised if, on making this discovery, the physiologist had burst out laughing himself at the thought of his own superiority. Therefore he should have said: Laughter comes from the idea of one's own superiority. A Satanic idea, if there ever was one! And what pride and delusion! For it is a notorious fact that all the madmen in the asylums have an excessively overdeveloped idea of their own superiority: I hardly know of any who suffer from the madness of humility. Note, too, that laughter is one of the most frequent and numerous expressions of madness. And now, see how everything falls into place. When Virginie, once fallen, has declined by one degree in purity, the idea of her own superiority will begin to dawn upon her; she will be more learned from the point of view of the world; and she will laugh.

I said that laughter contained a symptom of failing; and, in fact, what more striking token of debility could you demand than a nervous convulsion, an involuntary spasm comparable to a sneeze and prompted by the sight of someone else's misfortune? This misfortune is almost always a mental failing. And can you imagine a phenomenon more deplorable than one failing taking delight in another? But there is worse to follow. The misfortune is sometimes of a very much lower kind—a failure in the physical order. To take one of the most commonplace examples in life, what is there so delightful in the sight of a man falling on the ice or in the street, or stumbling at the end of a pavement, that the countenance of his brother in Christ should contract in such an intemperate manner, and the muscles of his face should suddenly leap into life like a timepiece at midday or a clockwork

toy? The poor devil has disfigured himself, at the very least; he may even have broken an essential member. Nevertheless the laugh has gone forth, sudden and irrepressible. It is certain that if you care to explore this situation, you will find a certain unconscious pride at the core of the laughter's thought. That is the point of departure. 'Look at me! I am not falling,' he seems to say. 'Look at me! I am walking upright. I would never be so silly as to fail to see a gap in the pavement or a cobblestone blocking the way.'

The Romantic school, or, to put it better, the Satanic school, which is one of its subdivisions, had a proper understanding of this primordial law of laughter; or at least, if they did not all understand it, all, even in their grossest extravagances and exaggerations, sensed it and applied it exactly. All the miscreants of melodrama, accursed, damned and fatally marked with a grin which runs from ear to ear, are in the pure orthodoxy of laughter. Furthermore they are almost all the grand-children, legitimate or illegitimate, of the renowned wanderer Melmoth, [note: Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) was the masterpiece of its author, the Rev. C. R. Maturin (1782-1824). It was one of the most influential of all the novels of horror, and Baudelaire's great admiration for it was revealed in his desire to make a new French translation, on the grounds that the existing translation was inadequate] that great Satanic creation of the Reverend Maturin. What could be greater, what more mighty, relative to poor humanity, than the pale, bored figure of Melmoth? And yet he has a weak and contemptible side to him, which faces against God and against the light. See, therefore, how he laughs; see how he laughs, as he ceaselessly compares himself to the caterpillars of humanity,

he so strong, he so intelligent, he for whom a part of the conditional laws of mankind, both physical and intellectual, no longer exist! And this laughter is the perpetual explosion of his rage and his suffering. It is —you must understand—the necessary resultant of his contradictory double nature, which is infinitely great in relation to man, and infinitely vile and base in relation to absolute Truth and Justice. Melmoth is a living contradiction. He has parted company with the fundamental conditions of life; his bodily organs can no longer sustain his thought. And that is why his laughter freezes and wrings his entrails. It is a laugh which never sleeps, like a malady which continues on its way and completes a destined course. And thus the laughter of Melmoth, which is the highest expression of pride, is for ever performing its function as it lacerates and scorches the lips of the laughter for whose sins there can be no remission. [note: ‘A mirth which is not riot gaiety is often the mask which hides the convulsed and distorted features of agony—and laughter, which never yet was the expression of rapture, has often been the only intelligible language of madness and misery. Ecstasy only smiles—despair laughs...’ Melmoth (2nd ed., 1824), vol. III, p. 302.]

IV

And now let us recapitulate a little and establish more clearly our principal propositions, which amount to a sort of theory of laughter. Laughter is satanic: it is thus profoundly human. It is the consequence in man of the idea of his own superiority. And since laughter is essentially human, it is, in fact, essentially contradictory; that is to say that it is at once a token of an infinite

grandeur and an infinite misery—the latter in relation to the absolute Being of whom man has an inkling, the former in relation to the beasts. It is from the perpetual collision of these two infinities that laughter is struck. The comic and the capacity for laughter are situated in the laugher and by no means in the object of his laughter. The man who trips would be the last to laugh at his own fall, unless he happened to be a philosopher, one who had acquired by habit a power of rapid self-division and thus of assisting as a disinterested spectator at the phenomena of his own ego. But such cases are rare. The most comic animals are the most serious monkeys, for example, and parrots. For that matter, if man were to be banished from creation, there would be no such thing as the comic, for the animals do not hold themselves superior to the vegetables, nor the vegetables to the minerals. While it is a sign of superiority in relation to brute creation (and under this heading I include the numerous pariahs of the mind), laughter is a sign of inferiority in relation to the wise, who, through the contemplative innocence of their minds, approach a childlike state. Comparing mankind with man, as we have a right to do, we see that primitive nations, in the same way as Virginie, have no conception of caricature and have no comedy (Holy Books never laugh, to whatever nations they may belong), but that as they advance little by little in the direction of the cloudy peaks of the intellect, or as they pore over the gloomy braziers of metaphysics, the nations of the world begin to laugh diabolically with the laughter of Melmoth; and finally we see that if, in these selfsame ultra-civilized nations, some mind is driven by superior ambition to pass beyond the limits of worldly pride and to make a bold leap towards pure poetry, then the resulting poetry, as limpid and profound as Nature herself, will be as void of laughter as is the soul of the Sage.

As the comic is a sign of superiority, or of a belief in one's own superiority, it is natural to hold that, before they can achieve the absolute purification promised by certain mystical prophets, the nations of the world will see a multiplication of comic themes in proportion as their superiority increases. But the comic changes its nature, too. In this way the angelic and the diabolic elements function in parallel. As humanity uplifts itself, it wins for evil, and for the understanding of evil, a power proportionate to that which it has won for good. And this is why I find nothing surprising in the fact that we, who are the children of a better law than the religious laws of antiquity—we, the favored disciples of Jesus—should possess a greater number of comic elements than pagan antiquity. For this very thing is a condition of our general intellectual power. I am quite prepared for sworn dissenters to cite the classic tale of the philosopher who died of laughing when he saw a donkey eating figs, or even the comedies of Aristophanes and those of Plautus. I would reply that, quite apart from the fact that these periods were essentially civilized, and there had already been a considerable shrinkage of belief, their type of the comic is still not quite the same as ours. It even has a touch of barbarity about it, and we can really only adopt it by a backward effort of mind, the result of which is called *pastiche*. As for the grotesque figures which antiquity has bequeathed us—the masks, the bronze figurines, the Hercules (all muscles), the little Priapi, with tongue curled in air and pointed ears (all cranium and phallus); and as for those prodigious phalluses on which the white daughters of Romulus innocently ride astride, those monstrous engines of generation, equipped with wings and bells—I believe that these things are all full of deep seriousness. Venus, Pan and

Hercules were in no sense figures of fun. It was not until after the coming of Christ, and with the aid of Plato and Seneca, that men began to laugh at them. I believe that the ancients were full of respect for drum-majors and for doers of mighty deeds of all kinds, and that none of those extravagant fetishes which I instanced a moment ago were anything other than tokens of adoration, or, at all events, symbols of power; in no sense were they intentionally comic emanations of the fancy. Indian and Chinese idols are unaware that they are ridiculous; it is in us. Christians, that their comicality resides.

V

It would be a mistake to suppose that we have got rid of every difficulty. The mind that is least accustomed to these aesthetic subtleties would very quickly be able to counter me with the insidious objection that there are *different varieties of laughter*. It is not always a disaster, a failing or an inferiority in which we take our delight. Many sights which provoke our laughter are perfectly innocent; not only the amusements of childhood, but even many of the things that tickle the palate of artists, have nothing to do with the spirit of Satan.

There is certainly some semblance of truth in that. But first of all we ought to make a proper distinction between laughter and joy. Joy exists in itself, but it has various manifestations. Sometimes it is almost invisible; at others, it expresses itself in tears. Laughter is only an expression, a symptom, a diagnostic. Symptom of what? That is the question. Joy is a unity. Laughter

is the expression of a double, or contradictory, feeling; and that is the reason why a convulsion occurs. And so, the laughter of children, which I hold for a vain objection, is altogether different, even as a physical expression, even as a form, from the laughter of a man who attends a play, or who looks at a caricature, or from the terrible laughter of Melmoth —of Melmoth, the outcast of society, wandering somewhere between the last boundaries of the territory of mankind and the frontiers of the higher life; of Melmoth, who always believes himself to be on the point of freedom from his infernal pact, and longs without ceasing to barter that superhuman power, which is his disaster, for the pure conscience of a simpleton, which is his envy. For the laughter of children is like the blossoming of a flower. It is the joy of receiving, the joy of breathing, the joy of contemplating, of living, of growing. It is a vegetable joy. And so, in general, it is more like a smile—something analogous to the wagging of a dog's tail, or the purring of a cat. And if there still remains some distinction between the laughter of children and such expressions of animal contentment, I think that we should hold that this is because their laughter is not entirely exempt from ambition, as is only proper to little scraps of men—that is, to budding Satans.

But there is one case where the question is more complicated. It is the laughter of man—but a true and violent laughter—at the sight of an object which is neither a sign of weakness nor of disaster among his fellows. It is easy to guess that I am referring to the laughter caused by the grotesque. Fabulous creations, beings whose authority and *raison d'etre* cannot be drawn from the code of common sense, often provoke in us an insane and excessive mirth, which expresses itself in interminable paroxysms and

swoons. It is clear that a distinction must be made, and that here we have a higher degree of the phenomenon. From the artistic point of view, the comic is an imitation: the grotesque a creation. The comic is an imitation mixed with a certain creative faculty, that is to say with an artistic *ideality*. Now human pride, which always takes the upper hand and is the natural cause of laughter in the case of the comic, turns out to be the natural cause of laughter in the case of the grotesque too, for this is a creation mixed with a certain imitative faculty—imitative, that is, of elements pre-existing in nature. I mean that in this case laughter is still the expression of an idea of superiority—no longer now of man over man, but of man over nature. Do not retort that this idea is too subtle; that would be no sufficient reason for rejecting it. The difficulty is to find another plausible explanation. If this one seems far-fetched and just a little hard to accept, that is because the laughter caused by the grotesque has about it something profound, primitive and axiomatic, which is much closer to the innocent life and to absolute joy than is the laughter caused by the comic in man's behavior. Setting aside the question of utility, there is the same difference between these two sorts of laughter as there is between the *implicated* school of writing and the school of art for art's sake. Thus the grotesque dominates the comic from a proportionate height.

From now onwards I shall call the grotesque ‘the absolute comic’, in antithesis to the ordinary comic, which I shall call ‘the significative comic’. The latter is a clearer language, and one easier for the man in the street to understand, and above all easier to analyze, its element being visibly double—art and the moral idea. But the absolute comic, which comes much

closer to nature, emerges as a unity which calls for the intuition to grasp it. There is but one criterion of the grotesque, and that is laughter—immediate laughter. Whereas with the significative comic it is quite permissible to laugh a moment late—that is no argument against its validity; it all depends upon one's quickness of analysis.

I have called it 'the absolute comic'. Nevertheless we should be on our guard. From the point of view of the definitive absolute, all that remains is joy. The comic can only be absolute in relation to fallen humanity, and it is in this way that I am understanding it.

VI

In its triple-distilled essence the absolute comic turns out to be the prerogative of those superior artists whose minds are sufficiently open to receive any absolute ideas at all. Thus, the man who until now has been the most sensitive to these ideas, and who set a good part of them in action in his purely aesthetic, as well as his creative work, is Theodore Hoffmann. He always made a proper distinction between the ordinary comic and the type which he called 'the innocent comic'. The learned theories which he had put forth didactically, or thrown out in the form of inspired conversations or critical dialogues, he often sought to boil down into creative works; and it is from these very works that I shall shortly draw my most striking examples when I come to give a series of applications of the above stated principles, and to pin a sample under each categorical heading.

Furthermore, within the absolute and significative types of the comic we find species, sub-species and families. The division can take place on different grounds. First of all it can be established according to a pure philosophic law, as I was making a start to do: and then according to the law of artistic creation. The first is brought about by the primary separation of the absolute from the significative comic; the second is based upon the kind of special capacities possessed by each artist. And finally it is also possible to establish a classification of varieties of the comic with regard to climates and various national aptitudes. It should be observed that each term of each classification can be completed and given a nuance by the adjunction of a term from one of the others, just as the law of grammar teaches us to modify a noun by an adjective. Thus, any German or English artist is more or less naturally equipped for the absolute comic, and at the same time he is more or less of an idealizer. I wish now to try and give selected examples of the absolute and significative comic, and briefly to characterize the comic spirit proper to one or two eminently artistic nations, before coming on to the section in which I want to discuss and analyze at greater length the talent of those men who have made it their study and their whole existence.

If you exaggerate and push the consequences of the significative comic to their furthest limits, you reach the savage variety, just as the synonymous expression of the innocent variety, pushed one degree further, is the *absolute* comic.

In France, the land of lucid thought and demonstration, where the natural and direct aim of art is utility, we generally find the significative type. In this

genre Moliere is our best expression. But since at the root of our character there is an aversion for all extremes, and since one of the symptoms of every emotion, every science and every art in France is an avoidance of the excessive, the absolute and the profound, there is consequently but little of the savage variety to be found in this country; in the same way our grotesque seldom rises to the absolute.

Rabelais, who is the great French master of the grotesque, preserves an element of utility and reason in the very midst of his most prodigious fantasies. He is directly symbolic. His comedy nearly always possesses the transparence of an allegory. In French caricature, in the plastic expression of the comic, we shall find this dominant spirit. It must be admitted that the enormous poetic good humor which is required for the true grotesque is found but rarely among us in level and continuous doses. At long intervals we see the vein reappear; but it is not an essentially national one. In this context I should mention certain interludes of Moliere, which are unfortunately too little read or acted— those of the *Malade Imaginaire* and the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, for example; and the camivalesque figures of Callot. As for the essentially French comedy in the *Contes* of Voltaire, its *raison d'etre* is always based upon the idea of superiority; it is entirely significative.

Germany, sunk in her dreams, will afford us excellent specimens of the absolute comic. There all is weighty, profound and excessive. To find true comic savagery, however, you have to cross the Channel and visit the foggy realms of spleen. Happy, noisy, carefree Italy abounds in the innocent

variety. It was at the very heart of Italy, at the hub of the southern carnival, in the midst of the turbulent Corso, that Theodore Hoffmann discerningly placed his eccentric drama *The Princess Brambilla*. The Spaniards are very well endowed in this matter. They are quick to arrive at the cruel stage, and their most grotesque fantasies often contain a dark element.

It will be a long time before I forget the first English pantomime that I saw played. It was some years ago, at the *Theatre des Varietes*. Doubtless only a few people will remember it, for very few seem to have taken to this kind of theatrical diversion, and those poor English mimes had a sad reception from us. The French public does not much like to be taken out of its element. Its taste is not very cosmopolitan, and changes of horizon upset its vision. Speaking for myself, however, I was excessively struck by their way of understanding the comic. It was said—chiefly by the indulgent, in order to explain their lack of success—that these were vulgar, mediocre artists—understudies. But that was not the point. They were English; that was the important thing.

It seemed to me that the distinctive mark of this type of the comic was *violence*. I propose to prove it with a few samples from my memories.

First of all, Pierrot was not the figure to which the lately lamented Deburau had accustomed us—that figure pale as the moon, mysterious as silence, supple and mute as the serpent, long and straight as a gibbet—that artificial man activated by eccentric springs. The English Pierrot swept upon us like a hurricane, fell down like a sack of coals, and when he laughed his laughter

made the auditorium quake; his laugh was like a joyful clap of thunder. He was a short, fat man, and to increase his imposingness he wore a beribboned costume which encompassed his jubilant person as birds are encompassed with their down and feathers, or angoras with their fur. Upon his floured face he had stuck, crudely and without transition or gradation, two enormous patches of pure red. A feigned prolongation of the lips, by means of two bands of carmine, brought it about that when he laughed his mouth seemed to run from ear to ear.

As for his moral nature, it was basically the same as that of the Pierrot whom we all know—heedlessness and indifference, and consequently the gratification of every kind of greedy and rapacious whim, now at the expense of Harlequin, now of Cassandra or Leander. The only difference was that where Deburau would just have moistened the tip of his finger with his tongue, he stuck both fists and both feet into his mouth.

And everything else in this singular piece was expressed in the same way, with passionate gusto; it was the dizzy height of hyperbole.

Pierrot walks past a woman who is scrubbing her doorstep; after rifling her pockets, he makes to stuff into his own her sponge, her mop, her bucket, water and all! As for the way in which he endeavored to express his love to her, anyone who remembers observing the phanerogamous habits of the monkeys in their famous cage at the *Jardin des Plantes* can imagine it for himself. Perhaps I ought to add that the woman's role was taken by a very

long, very thin man, whose outraged modesty emitted shrill screams. It was truly an intoxication of laughter—something both terrible and irresistible.

For some misdeed or other, Pierrot had in the end to be guillotined. Why the guillotine rather than the gallows, in the land of Albion? ... I do not know; presumably to lead up to what we were to see next. Anyway, there it was, the engine of death, there, set up on the French boards which were markedly surprised at this romantic novelty. After struggling and bellowing like an ox that scents the slaughter-house, at last Pierrot bowed to his fate. His head was severed from his neck—a great red and white head, which rolled noisily to rest in front of the prompter's box, showing the bleeding disk of the neck, the split vertebrae and all the details of a piece of butcher's meat just dressed for the counter. And then, all of a sudden, the decapitated trunk, moved by its irresistible obsession with theft, jumped to its feet, triumphantly 'lifted' its own head as though it was a ham or a bottle of wine, and, with far more circumspection than the great St. Denis, proceeded to stuff it into its pocket!

Set down in pen and ink, all this is pale and chilly. But how could the pen rival the pantomime? The pantomime is the refinement, the quintessence of comedy; it is the pure comic element, purged and concentrated. Therefore, with the English actors' special talent for hyperbole, all these monstrous buffooneries took on a strangely thrilling reality.

Certainly one of the most remarkable things, in the sense of absolute comedy—or if I may call it so, the metaphysics of absolute comedy—was the beginning of this beautiful piece, a prologue filled with a high aesthetic.

The principal characters, Pierrot, Cassandra, Harlequin, Colombine and Leander are facing the public, gentle and good as gold. They are all but rational beings and do not differ much from the fine fellows in the audience. The miraculous breath which is about to inspire them to such extraordinary antics has not yet touched their brains. A few quips from Pierrot can give no more than a pale idea of what he will be doing shortly. The rivalry between Harlequin and Leander has just declared itself. A fairy takes Harlequin's side; she is the eternal protectress of mortals who are poor and in love. She promises him her protection, and, to give him immediate proof of it, she waves her wand in the air with a mysterious and authoritative gesture.

At once a dizzy intoxication is abroad; intoxication swims in the air; we breathe intoxication; it is intoxication that fills the lungs and renews the blood in the arteries.

What is this intoxication? It is the absolute comic, and it has taken charge of each one of them. The extraordinary gestures executed by Leander, Pierrot and Cassandra make it quite clear that they feel themselves forcibly projected into a new existence. They do not seem at all put out. They set about preparing for the great disasters and the tumultuous destiny which awaits them, like a man who spits on his hands and rubs them together before doing some heroic deed. They flourish their arms, like windmills lashed by the tempest. It must be to loosen their joints—and they will certainly need it. All this is carried out to great gusts of laughter, full of a huge contentment. Then they turn to a game of leap-frog, and once their

aptitude and their agility have been duly registered, there follows a dazzling volley of kicks, punches and slaps which blaze and crash like a battery of artillery. But all of this is done in the best of spirits. Every gesture, every cry, every look seems to be saying: 'The fairy has willed it, and our fate hurls us on—it doesn't worry me! Come, let's get started! Let's get down to business!' And then they do get down to business, through the whole fantastic work, which, properly speaking, only starts at this point—that is to say, on the frontier of the marvelous.

Under cover of this hysteria, Harlequin and Colombine have danced away in flight, and with an airy foot they proceed to run the gauntlet of their adventures.

And now another example. This one is taken from a singular author—a man of ranging mind, whatever may be said, who unites to the significative mockery of France the mad, sparkling, lighthearted gaiety of the lands of the sun as well as the profound comic spirit of Germany. I am returning once again to Hoffmann.

In the story entitled *Daucus Carota, the King of the Carrots*, or by some translators *The King's Betrothed*, no sight could be more beautiful than the arrival of the great company of the Carrots in the farm-yard of the betrothed maiden's home. Look at all those little scarlet figures, like a regiment of English soldiers, with enormous green plumes on their heads, like carriage-footmen, going through a series of marvelous tricks and capers on their little horses! The whole thing is carried out with astonishing agility. The

adroitness and ease with which they fall on their heads is assisted by their heads being bigger and heavier than the rest of their bodies, like those toy soldiers made of elder-pith, which have lead weights in their caps.

The unfortunate young girl, obsessed with dreams of grandeur, is fascinated by this display of military might. But an army on parade is one thing; how different an army in barracks, furbishing its arms, polishing its equipment, or, worse still, ignobly snoring on its dirty, stinking camp beds! That is the reverse of the medal; the rest was but a magic trick, an apparatus of seduction. But her father, who is a wise man and well versed in sorcery, wants to show her the other side of all this magnificence. Thus, at an hour when the vegetables are sleeping their brutish sleep, never suspecting that any spy could catch them unawares, he lifts the flap of one of the tents of this splendid army. Then it is that the poor dreaming girl sees all this mass of red and green soldiery in its appalling undress, wallowing and snoring in the filthy midden from which it first emerged. In its night-cap all that military magnificence is nothing more than a putrid swamp.

There are many other examples of the absolute comic that I might take from the admirable Hoffmann. Anyone who really wants to understand what I have in mind should read with care *Daucus Carota*, *Peregrinus Tyss*, *The Golden Pot*, and over and above all, *The Princess Brambilla*, which is like a catechism of high aesthetics. What pre-eminently distinguishes Hoffmann is his unintentional—and sometimes very intentional—blending of a certain measure of the significative comic with the most absolute variety. His most supernatural and fugitive comic conceptions, which are often like the visions

of a drunken man, have a very conspicuous moral meaning; you might imagine that you had to do with the profoundest type of physiologist or alienist who was amusing himself by clothing his deep wisdom in poetic forms, like a learned man who might speak in parables and allegories.

Take for example, if you will, the character of Giglio Fava, the actor who suffered from a chronic dualism, in *The Princess Brambilla*. This single character changes personality from time to time. Under the name of Giglio Fava he swears enmity for the Assyrian prince, Comelio Chiapperi; but when he is himself the Assyrian prince, he pours forth his deepest and the most regal scorn upon his rival for the hand of the Princess—upon a wretched mummer whose name, they say, is Giglio Fava.

I should perhaps add that one of the most distinctive marks of the absolute comic is that it remains unaware of itself. This is evident not only in certain animals, like monkeys, in whose comicality gravity plays an essential part, nor only in certain antique sculptural caricatures of which I have already spoken, but even in those Chinese monstrosities which delight us so much and whose intentions are far less comic than people generally think. A Chinese idol, although it be an object of veneration, looks very little different from a tumble-toy or a pot-bellied chimney-ornament.

And so, to be finished with all these subtleties and all these definitions, let me point out, once more and for the last time, that the dominant idea of superiority is found in the absolute, no less than in the significative comic, as I have already explained (at too great a length, perhaps): further, that in

order to enable a comic emanation, explosion, or, as it were, a chemical separation of the comic to come about, there must be two beings face to face with one another: again, that the special abode of the comic is in the laughter, the spectator: and finally, that an exception must nevertheless be made in connection with the ‘law of ignorance’ for those men who have made a business of developing in themselves their feeling for the comic, and of dispensing it for the amusement of their fellows. This last phenomenon comes into the class of all artistic phenomena which indicate the existence of a permanent dualism in the human being—that is, the power of being oneself and someone else at one and the same time.

And so, to return to my primary definitions and to express myself more clearly, I would say that when Hoffmann gives birth to the absolute comic it is perfectly true that he knows what he is doing; but he also knows that the essence of this type of the comic is that it should appear to be unaware of itself and that it should produce in the spectator, or rather the reader, a joy in his own superiority and in the superiority of man over nature. Artists create the comic; after collecting and studying its elements, they know that such-and-such a being is comic, and that it is so only on condition of its being unaware of its nature, in the same way that, following an inverse law, an artist is only an artist on condition that he is a double man and that there is not one single phenomenon of his double nature of which he is ignorant.

On the Essence of Laughter and, in General, on the Comic in the Plastic Arts, Le Portfeuille, 8 July 1855

The Grass of Idleness by Patrick Bruskiewich

“Whatever progress this world has made has been always because of the effort and sacrifices of the few.”

Rear Admiral speaking to Brubaker in *The Bridges at Toko Ri*

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”

Albert Einstein

“A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.

Sir Francis Bacon

“Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can be great!”

Mark Twain

I am a bohemian, that I freely admit, but the type of bohemian life I lead needs some explaining. Even for a bohemian, my lifestyle is unorthodox and unique, if I am counted among the eccentric. Down to the simple beginnings of my day, I enjoy the world in my own unique way. Let me give you a clue. My friends say if I were shave my salt and pepper beard I would very much look like Albert Einstein. I grew up admiring his physics and his philosophy. But let us not get ahead of things shall we.

The day that I sat to write this short story began in its usual fashion. *C'est délicieuse*, as the French would say, being tucked away in your own bed, warm and comfortable under the covers late on a Monday morning, especially on such a wet and cold Vancouver morning.

This particular morning it was already a few minutes after nine and I still hadn't lifted the covers and let the warmth escape. In fact, I still hadn't even lifted the shade from over my eyes, so apart from the cold air creeping in from my partly open balcony door, and the sound of the rain trickling in from my balcony I did not know what kind of a day it would be. I could guess – it was mid-October, and the West Coast winter rains had indeed arrived. Some years here in Vancouver it only rains twice— from October to April, and then from April to October. I suspected this would be such a year.

I would still be tucked away under the covers, because I do much of my best work in this bohemian state, were it not for the trickling of the rain. Well, the sound forced me out of my balmy bed and into my frigid bathroom. There were, after all, real human limitations to *mind over matter* and I had had a few cups of coffee too many the night before. Out I dashed *sans habillement* from under my thick covers, and next I was now enjoying another of life's simple pleasures. Life is, after all, about pleasure and delight, isn't it?

Well, after standing for a moment of simple pleasure I didn't bother slipping on my bath robe. It was one of the few things left over from a failed

marriage to a woman who took other people's lives for granted, perhaps ultimately driving me to my bohemian life. No I didn't put the robe on, not just yet. I needed to cool down a bit to fight the urge to snuggle once again deep within the sanctuary of my soft bed. This morning I knew if I returned that I would be stuck there until midday for sure.

After this pleasantry I staggered, half awake, in search of another delight. I stepped into my undersized kitchen to set the kettle on the stove. I love to cook but can never find enough counter space to cook the way I want to. *Crepe Suzette*, *Bouillabaisse*, or Lebanese Lamb Curry any one? I sure eat like a bohemian ...

I smiled, Time for coffee! The third pleasure of my day.

That's how it was this Monday morning, and I did not feel a twinge of guilt knowing that the rest of the world were up and about and either already plunked down at their work, or struggling through traffic to get to their daily toil. How did the song go? – "*I owe I owe it's off to work we go.*" I also did not think of the children sittings at their desks bored on another Monday morning at school. It was the sixteenth and well, that meant that last Friday had been the thirteenth.

Last Friday was special. I recently received an invitation to come to the October 13th opening of the *Mata Hari: The Myth and the Maiden* exhibit at the Museum of Friesland in Leuwarden in Holland. It was a great honor to receive this invitation. A few years ago I wrote a theater script titled *The*

Many Loves of Mata Hari that was read and well-received by the curators of the exhibit and I have since invited them to perform my play with attribution and without fee in tribute to Mata Hari. No I didn't go to the opening, although it would have been a delight to go. It was my bohemian lifestyle that saw me write the script, and it was that same bohemian lifestyle that prevented me from going. It costs time and money to go.

The previous Friday, the 6th, I did my usual *first Friday of October* ritual. I woke early, turned on my portable radio, listened to the 5 a.m. news, cursed and then went back to bed – It was another wasted gesture by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. The following morning I did a broadcast of my internet *Radio Free Vancouver*, Broadcast Thirty Three, the morning after the latest Oslo Committee announcement and sent a link to the Broadcast to the King of Norway. I did the broadcast at zero-five-buffalo, in the middle of the dog watch, me being a former naval officer with the Royal Canadian Navy. At one time I was the youngest naval officer in Canada and one of the youngest serving with a N.A.T.O. navy until I broke my neck at sea saving the life of a foolish officer cadet. I was barely twenty at the time. My broadcast was meant to show how meaningless the 2017 Oslo Committee's decision was.

I had chosen my bohemian lifestyle and so instead of heralding my Monday morning with fresh ground, instead I mixed a cup of instant coffee. There was no cream or sugar to be had in my larder. There was once a time that I could have afforded a cow and perhaps even the farm itself, but those years are decades behind me. I had chosen to leave that life behind. Besides, in

my *l'angoisse bohémienne* I had reasoned it would spoil coffee's good taste and well ... is it not the sugar and cream that kills you, not the coffee? It was just announced this week that medical scientists have spent years and years and many millions of dollars to discover that sugar causes unhealthy cells in our body to thrive and multiply uncontrollably ... well figure that!

Perhaps there was no sugar or cream in my larder for another reason. Maybe it was that I am too proud to pinch packets of sugar or buttons of cream from the coffee shops I from time to time visited when a friend offered to buy me fresh ground.

All of this was my choice. You could not have one without the other. If you loved sleeping in on a Monday morning, at the end of the day you could not afford any fresh ground coffee beans. To be perfectly honest it has been ages since I had a cup of good coffee, but I really don't miss it. It is, after all, such a small sacrifice to make. My friends are few and far between. Most are creative and bohemian, sort of like me. They hang out at my studio apartment, or I at their modest digs.

In my place they have to fight my books for room to sit. My friends say I don't live here, my books do. Yes, when I see an interesting books I snag it. Books like *Le Bestiaire* by Guillaume Apollinaire, or a first North American Grove edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, or a first edition of the complete short stories by Ernest Hemingway. You might find several good books by Winston Churchill. Then there is my special collection ... the one that

reflects my unique bohemian lifestyle. I have a math and physics library second to none.

I imagine you are now wondering about my breakfast. My French Canadian grandmother use to say *nous sommes pauvres mais nous nourris bien*. I leave the translation to you. A good Catholic grandmother, she had had seven children and, when they were grown up a bit and on their own, they somehow knew when she had set her old and battered soup pot on the stove. Her Saturday night soup would start as a thick *potage au légumes* and end up a *consommé aux végétales* as her seven hungry children miraculously appeared, one after the other, at her kitchen door in their quest for a hearty bowl of soup. She took to adding cups of water and keeping her *élixir chaud sur la cuisinière*.

I had had a big Sunday dinner of *Boeuf Bourguignon* the night before, and so I really wasn't all that hungry. So, this morning I did my usual Monday breakfast fare: eight pocket-watch sized pancakes, with cranberry jam, and an omelet made with chopped onions, sliced green olives, a diced tomato and some rice as its fill. It was my version of a rice omelet. To make it I used sunflower seed oil, four small green olives sliced thinly, a fifth of a small red onion and a quarter of a small tomato. I folded into it left over rice from Sunday dinner. On top I dressed the rice omelet with a smile made of red ketchup.

What – you have never had a rice omelet! You don't know what you are missing! I first came across the whole ritual of the rice omelet in the superb

Japanese film *Tampopo* – a sushi Western from the 1980's that featured a small ramen shop owner who was trying to survive in a world that was pretty much stacked against her. If you have never seen this gem of a film I highly recommend it, for two reasons, it is charming cinematography, and the story is ultimately composed of little vignettes about the pleasures of good simple food and good company. I will let you figure out why I have called *Tampopo* a sushi Western. In the end, the 'good guys win' by overcoming huge obstacles and creating the ultimate ramen.

Supposedly, this little pearl of Japanese cinematography resurrected fine Ramen throughout the world. The film's opening scene has two hard working truck drivers on the highway late one dark and stormy night, and while the driver is trying to concentrate on the road ahead, his side kick is reading him a story of two men enjoying a hot bowl of ramen at a noodle shop – well, you can well imagine what happens next. My mouth is watering. It's obviously Pavolvian!

All this talk about food might be making you hungry, but do fight the urge to set down my short story and dash off for some culinary pleasure.

There is another sinful pleasure I do either every morning or every day. I know it is a sinful pleasure. But it has become something of an addiction for me. I need to do it every day; at least once in the morning and once again at night. I take my time and enjoy it to its fullest. You see ... I can't seem to stop doing it!

Perhaps it may become an affliction, drawing me down into my inescapable abyss. One day I might just decide to enjoy my sinful pleasure and nothing else. I don't know. Now that I have started, I just can't seem to stop. It feels so good. Maybe if I go blind?

It's a drug of sorts, but not in its reality – no it is not listed in the pharmacopeia. Although, perhaps I think it should be, but then again endorphins are not listed there are they? And boy do the endorphins flow when I am enjoying my sinful pleasure!

I can't seem to stop now that I have started in earnest. Oh, I have already said that haven't I? I do it where ever I can; in the bath; when I am alone in bed, which is now quite often. I sometimes try to do it in the back seat of a bus, but only if there is enough seclusion and only in the light of day. Then there is that corner table at the bistro. A few times I have been told to gather up my things and leave a few bistros ... when my coffee cup sat empty long enough. I even do it in the library, but that's to be expected.

As I partake in my sinful pleasure do I really care what other people think? Reluctantly I do. You see I don't want to be seen doing it. I just want to be left alone with my pleasures. I don't really want anyone to come sit with me and interrupt me, although some have tried. It's just not the same with someone sitting there intruding.

Why should I share my pleasure with anyone? It is, after all, my sinful pleasure. And not everyone would want to bear witness to it, or even try to

understand. God forbid if they wanted to join in! That would be too awkward even for me.

Sometimes it leaves my limbs aching. Sometimes my heart races – it depends on how good it was. If it is really, really good it sure gets the old cardiovascular system going full bore. If it is not, then it's a bad day, and the blood runs slow or sluggish. Perhaps it's just how it comes to its finality. The climb to a plateau is hardly noticed if the conclusion is good. If the finale is not, well it wasn't worth the climb. It has to spout out, like fine champagne with the cork just pulled.

I tell you about it because, while it is a sinful pleasure, I want you to empathize. It is good for the body, as much as the mind. In our day and age of coldness and antipathy, anything that gets the warm blood flowing must be good, right? And if afterwards your mind is clearer, who needs the *Pernod* then – although *Pernod* is a good chaser. It does enhance the senses, especially if the climb is long and arduous and the finale anything but magnificent.

I don't like doing it on an empty stomach, nor on a full stomach, but somewhere in between. Sometimes I have a snack and then get to it. And music, while, classical music is the best, especially when you do it in the bath. There was the time my girl friend and I did it together in a salt water bath – now that was lush! Perhaps that is the best of sinful pleasures!

Sometimes I do it slowly, savoring every second of bliss. And other times, it's just too rough for me and I move my fingers quickly. Sometimes there is a softness to it, and sometimes it is very hard to do, and the fingers move slowly.

What was it that Poe once said of the real and the unreal? *The realities of the world affected me as visions, and as visions only, while the wild ideas of the lands of dreams became, in turn, not the material of my every-day existence, but in very deed that existence utterly and solely in itself.*

I know girls do it too, perhaps more so than boys, and unquestionably more so than they might generously admit. It's in their nature. But heh, what's wrong with that? *Vie la difference!*

Girls are so damned lucky, for they experience their sinful pleasure much earlier and with greater passion than boys. Undoubtedly, they experience it with greater abandon. Compared to these flighty birds, we boys are just crows, left to gather and squawk.

Life is just not just, nor evenhanded. In the world of the sinful pleasures, we boys are just devils ... compared to the angels.

We are reminded of this in a story by Poe, by words writ by someone other than he ... *"Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."*

Well, my sinful pleasure of this morning comes to a finale. Here I am laying back in the bath. The water has grown quite cold. But I did not notice this in my reading frenzy. I myself am quite hot. Oh, please turn around I am bare naked.

I set my book down and stand, being careful not to drip all over a short story by Ernest Hemingway. When I get home this evening, before I even make myself dinner, I will be right back here with a sinful pleasure written by Anais Nin and a sniff of *Pernod*. You're welcome to join me for a simple pleasure in my bath. Just bring your own book. *Ah what a life!*

As I am drying myself off I was thinking about what I was going to write about this morning. Every morning, as part and parcel of my life's rites and ceremonies I sit and write. This ritual is as much a part of me as any of the other pleasures I enjoy in my somewhat unique bohemian existence. Again, mine is an existence I have freely chosen, or so I like to think.

Almost ten years ago I happen upon a strange little book titled *Bohemian Manifesto: a field guide for living at the edge*, by Lauren Stover, Bullfinch Press, New York, 2004. At the time it was obvious to my inner self that I was slipping comfortably into some Bohemian angst, as I might even slip into a comfortable shirt. My outer self was left the way it was, for that time being.

In the *Bohemian Manifesto* the author defined five different Bohemian types: the Beat, the Dandy, the Gypsy, the Nouveau and the Zen Bohemian.

Frankly, just by their listing you can probably envisage their existential nature. But ... none of these *classes* seemed to fit my chosen existence. I decide on the word *class* on purpose because even in the Bohemian world there is some differentiation and prejudgment, beyond the in and out of things.

And so I decided to create my own *vie de Bohème*. I have in the past lived a rather conventional life, doing rather conventional things, and, well, to be perfectly honest it nearly killed me, body and soul. What's left of my body I strive to nurture and safeguard. My soul, on the other hand, was nearly lost and it had to be reborn. It has been through my writing that my soul has achieved its Renaissance. My writing has been a large part of my *vie de Bohème*.

There are very few people who can sit for any extended period of time and dash out a few thousand well chosen words. There are fewer people who can do the opposite, tell a story in as few characters as possible. I guess I am one of those types of people that fit both extremes – the long and the short of writing.

For instance, seventeen syllables of my published poetry went something like this:

Life is a steep hill
but do I mind? I want to
Haiku my way up.

It was one of the poems I have published in my book *I Love the Number Sixty-Nine – One Hundred Beautiful Love Poems*.

And last year, as part of the Pique Magazine *My First Crush* Valentine's Day essay contest I submitted the following sad narrative of 200 words:

“My neighbour was a girl my age and fun to play with. We shared an interest in picture books. I remember her pleasant smile and her giggle, and her blue eyes and her curly red hair. We could not wait to enter first grade.

But sadly she would not make it. One day she went away to the hospital. When she came home I knew something was wrong. But neither she nor her parents would say what. My once energetic and happy friend now had neither energy nor happiness.

One day I snuck over to see her. She was asleep. I thought my prized teddy bear would bring her good luck and tucked it into bed beside her. She took it with her to the hospital. She never came home.

The time between her diagnosis and her demise was eight months. It was a childhood leukemia that took her.

Her parents, on their return from the hospital were overcome with grief. They asked me if I wanted my teddy bear back. I said no. I wanted her to have it, to play with it in heaven.

She was buried with my teddy bear.”

I bet you have a tear in your eye. With this sad narrative I won one of the Valentine Day prizes, which I asked to be donated to the Emergency Room nurses at Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver to thank them for looking after me so well the last time I was in to see them with a heart arrhythmia.

When I was recently asked *Why I Write*, I ventured forth with these words:

“There are perhaps three main reasons why I write and these reasons are a true, dear and clear reflection of my beliefs. I write to pursue truth, virtue and understanding.

I cannot claim that writing has been in my blood since I was very young, however I can claim that I have become a mature writer by reading the fine works of others and contemplating the truths, virtues and understanding they have shared with the world.

In the pursuit of truth there is that dichotomy that Immanuel Kant expressed, which I paraphrase ... “*two things fill the mind with ever increasing wonder and awe ... the starry heavens above us and the moral laws within us.*”

It is not a pure awe that truth requires of us but instead an impersonal and practical one that is set in our efforts to understand the physical laws that govern to the far corners of the universe in which we reside, as well as the moral laws that govern our actions, we mere baubles in the starry heavens.

Those corners of the universe can be to the very large, the scale of galaxies and the universe itself, or it might be the corners set out in the other direction, that where quarks and leptons reside and quanta is the norm. As we well know, given the advances in modern science, these two limits, the very large and the very small, are directly coupled to one another, borrowing a mathematical concept from particle physics. And we too, organic machines made of organic materials, are delicately coupled in at the middle of the universal scale of distances.

What of the moral laws and how they pertain to virtue? I am Catholic and bring to my life a Catholic sensibility. The world seems a far more sinister place than two decades ago. While the Cold War is deemed over, the world has become even more lawless and many more millions suffer today the inequities of war and oppression than in the past. The United Nations count the suffering numbers at 65 million, numbers greater than at any time since the end of the Second World War, with 100 million more suffering from famine and a lack of clean, potable water.

I write to express my Catholic sensibilities to lend aid to those who suffer and to encourage those who govern to do more to alleviate their suffering.

In the pursuit of understanding I reflect to a large degree the sensibilities of Albert Einstein in that this understanding does not deem us the centre of the universe, but a minuscule part of it, with a clear understanding of our limitations and possibilities. It was he who reminded us that, “*once you stop learning ... you start dying.*” Is it possible that the troubled heart of our civilization has already begun to wither and fade?

Every moment is precious, all of our words and actions meaningful, if we decide to make them so.”

I take this moral responsibility rather seriously. For instance, I am presently encouraging the community of nations and the United Nations to create a new organization, the International Civil Earth Observation Organization with the expressed purpose of helping the UN Security Council when it deals with humanitarian relief and conflict resolution. The organization would be built on the International Disaster Management Charter that Canada helped to establish with the European Space Agency to use satellites for peaceful purposes. In aid of this effort the present UN ambassador in responsible for the Peaceful Use of Space is, in fact, a Canadian, and Canada’s new Governor General is a former Canadian Astronaut the Rt.

Hon. Julie Payette. Incidentally, the acronym for this new UN Organization reads I.C.E.O.O. ...

Before you begin to think that I only write poetry, short stories and prose, I am in fact someone who also mostly mathematics and science books and as such I am *un Bohème Mathématique* – a Mathematical Bohemian – and not merely who fits badly in one or more of the other five classes – the Beat, the Dandy, the Gypsy, the Nouveau and the Zen Bohemian. I am in good company with the likes of Pythagoras, Archimedes, Galileo, Newton and Einstein, great souls who were themselves Mathematical Bohemians.

I am rather proud of being a *Bohème Mathématique* for to me it is easy to be eccentric and be, say, a Zen Bohemian, trotting around claiming to be a Buddhist and all. The thing is, I am never quite sure what being a Zen Bohemian really means, and I am convinced it is just a throw away mannerism meant to acquire the patina of superiority, on the cheap.

My mother has her own theory that the only reason I love mathematics is that I fell a few times on my head when I was growing up. My own theory is that I have worked hard at my understanding of it. Anyone who claims that mathematics comes easy is perhaps not a very clever mathematician. I have only met two or three geniuses in my time and yes they are unique, but they are also few and far between.

It is also one thing to understand mathematics and another just to memorize the work of others, or worst yet, spend your afternoons trying to memorize

pi to say 1,000 digits. When I am asked about this I smile and say that such stunts are best left that for the freak show in the circus.

Besides who needs to memorize it when to the accuracy we all require

$$\pi \sim \frac{335}{113} = 3.1415929 \dots$$

which is good enough to three parts in ten-million. I suspect it was someone like the ancient Greek mathematician Archimedes who discovered this approximation some 23 centuries ago. He was also perhaps the person who felt that

$$\pi \sim \left(\frac{4}{3}\right)^4 = 3.160 \dots$$

was good enough for the practical measurements at hand, being accurate enough to better than two parts in one hundred.

There is after all a difference between the popular writer like Lancelot Hogben and a professional mathematician like Godfrey Harold Hardy. I imagine Hogben was quite pleased to be made into a Fellow of The Royal Society. If Hardy had still be alive when this happened he would have had a pithy thing or two to say.

Then, of course, there are unique souls like Srinivasa Ramanujan, who have been made into mythical figures by non-mathematicians, and now have a mythical far beyond his real worth. I have read and understand most of Ramanujan's work and while it is interesting and somewhat eccentric I do not think it is all that brilliant to be perfectly honest.

For instance, I have read the 1918 Royal Society of London paper by Hardy and Ramanujan *On the Coefficients in the Expansions of Certain Modular Functions* and do not find it of the same importance of say Albert Einstein's 1905 paper *Zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper*, or his later papers on General Relativity. I also believe the likes of Isaac Newton, Whitehead or Dirac did more to advance mathematics than either Hardy or even his friend Ramanujan. As for Hardy's anecdote about Ramanujan and 1729 ... yawn.

When I was a little bit I read and enjoyed Hogben's popular book *Mathematics for the Millions* that was first published in the 1930's and was republished a number of times with amendments. In a tribute of sorts, I have taken it upon myself to write a newer series of books with a higher standard of mathematics for the modern world which I have titled ***The New Mathematics for the Millions***. My growing number of mathematics books are being read and enjoyed around the world. Hardy is turning over in his grave given Hogben was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. I wonder if Ramanujan is doing this too.

In one of the shortest turn-around times I have ever experienced between submission and rejection of one of my pieces, a matter of a mere few minutes, I set these thoughts of mine loose on the world:

“Every day I sit to write a few hundred words hoping that I would be read and remembered. I am not married, except perhaps to my writing, and don’t have offspring, unless you count *mes oeuvres*.

I am of the age where my urge to procreate has long dried out. I write poetry, prose, as well as some science and math. More people read my science and math than my other manifestations. Maybe it is because I exist in my world of the *Mathematical Bohemian* and not that of the poetic or proselytic. Seen through my eyes, the world has a different meaning. I am more of an Einsteinian than a Kardashian.

Perhaps a hundred years from now, many decades after I am gone, I will be read and remembered, but maybe not for my science and math. Maybe a thousand years hence the curious will discover my poetry and prose and wondered why he died a poor and forgotten man.

Or, maybe in the end my science and math will have made the world a better place. Is there such a thing as mathematical justice?

I can only hope.”

One of my friends admitted to me that she was well shook up by my contrasting the Einsteinean world, to a Kardashian one. As you well imagined, she did not see herself living in the same world as mathematicians. As a writer I admit that am torn between composing poetry and prose, or writing something in the way of mathematics and science.

You are probably wondering why I chose to title this short story *The Grass of Idleness*. Well, to be a mathematical bohemian means that you spend much of your time being idle and watching the grass sway and grow. In fact this is a line from a very old Japanese Haiku poem. I am enjoying the Haiku style of poetry and plan to perhaps write a book titled *Seventeen Syllables* to share my Haiku with the world (I did write the book in memory of my mother who passed away in 2019 after a lengthy illness. She was a Japanophile). Seventeen is also an interesting prime number.

If you have been enjoying my short story you too have Haiku'd your way on a short journey through my sorted life.

An Unsympathetic Love Story by H.G. Wells

Of course the cultivated reader has heard of Aubrey Vair. He has published on three several occasions volumes of delicate verses,—some, indeed, border on indelicacy,—and his column “Of Things Literary” in the “Climax” is well known. His Byronic visage and an interview have appeared in the “Perfect Lady.” It was Aubrey Vair, I believe, who demonstrated that the humour of Dickens was worse than his sentiment, and who detected “a subtle bourgeois flavour” in Shakespeare. However, it is not generally known that Aubrey Vair has had erotic experiences as well as erotic inspirations. He adopted Goethe some little time since as his literary prototype, and that may have had something to do with his temporary lapse from sexual integrity.

For it is one of the commonest things that undermine literary men, giving us landslips and picturesque effects along the otherwise even cliff of their respectable life, ranking next to avarice, and certainly above drink, this instability called ⁴⁶⁰genius, or, more fully, the consciousness of genius, such as Aubrey Vair possessed. Since Shelley set the fashion, your man of gifts has been assured that his duty to himself and his duty to his wife are incompatible, and his renunciation of the Philistine has been marked by such infidelity as his means and courage warranted. Most virtue is lack of imagination. At any rate, a minor genius without his affections twisted into an inextricable muddle, and who did not occasionally shed sonnets over his troubles, I have never met.

Even Aubrey Vair did this, weeping the sonnets overnight into his blotting-book, and pretending to write literary *causerie* when his wife came down in her bath slippers to see what kept him up. She did not understand him, of course. He did this even before the other woman appeared, so ingrained is conjugal treachery in the talented mind. Indeed, he wrote more sonnets before the other woman came than after that event, because thereafter he spent much of his leisure in cutting down the old productions, retrimming them, and generally altering this ready-made clothing of his passion to suit her particular height and complexion.

Aubrey Vair lived in a little red villa with a lawn at the back and a view of the Downs behind Reigate. He lived upon discreet investment eked out by literary work. His wife was handsome, sweet, and gentle, and—such is the tender humility ⁴⁶¹of good married women—she found her life's happiness in seeing that little Aubrey Vair had well-cooked variety for dinner, and that their house was the neatest and brightest of all the houses they entered. Aubrey Vair enjoyed the dinners, and was proud of the house, yet nevertheless he mourned because his genius dwindled. Moreover, he grew plump, and corpulence threatened him.

We learn in suffering what we teach in song, and Aubrey Vair knew certainly that his soul could give no creditable crops unless his affections were harrowed. And how to harrow them was the trouble, for Reigate is a moral neighbourhood.

So Aubrey Vair's romantic longings blew loose for a time, much as a seedling creeper might, planted in the midst of a flower-bed. But at last, in the fulness of time, the other woman came to the embrace of Aubrey Vair's yearning heart-tendrils, and his romantic episode proceeded as is here faithfully written down.

The other woman was really a girl, and Aubrey Vair met her first at a tennis party at Redhill. Aubrey Vair did not play tennis after the accident to Miss Morton's eye, and because latterly it made him pant and get warmer and moister than even a poet should be; and this young lady had only recently arrived in England, and could not play. So they gravitated into the two vacant ⁴⁶²basket chairs beside Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt, in front of the hollyhocks, and were presently talking at their ease together.

The other woman's name was unpropitious,—Miss Smith,—but you would never have suspected it from her face and costume. Her parentage was promising, she was an orphan, her mother was a Hindoo, and her father an Indian civil servant; and Aubrey Vair—himself a happy mixture of Kelt and Teuton, as, indeed, all literary men have to be nowadays—naturally believed in the literary consequences of a mixture of races. She was dressed in white. She had finely moulded, pale features, great depth of expression, and a cloud of delicately *frisé* black hair over her dark eyes, and she looked at Aubrey Vair with a look half curious and half shy, that contrasted admirably with the stereotyped frankness of your common Reigate girl.

“This is a splendid lawn—the best in Redhill,” said Aubrey Vair, in the course of the conversation; “and I like it all the better because the daisies are spared.” He indicated the daisies with a graceful sweep of his rather elegant hand.

“They are sweet little flowers,” said the lady in white, “and I have always associated them with England, chiefly, perhaps, through a picture I saw ‘over there’ when I was very little, of children making daisy chains. I promised myself ⁴⁶³that pleasure when I came home. But, alas! I feel now rather too large for such delights.”

“I do not see why we should not be able to enjoy these simple pleasures as we grow older—why our growth should have in it so much forgetting. For my own part—”

“Has your wife got Jane’s recipe for stuffing trout?” asked Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt, abruptly.

“I really don’t know,” said Aubrey Vair.

“That’s all right,” said Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt. “It ought to please even you.”

“Anything will please me,” said Aubrey Vair; “I care very little—”

“Oh, it’s a lovely dish,” said Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt, and relapsed into contemplation.

“I was saying,” said Aubrey Vair, “that I think I still find my keenest pleasures in childish pastimes. I have a little nephew that I see a great deal of, and when we fly kites together, I am sure it would be hard to tell which of us is the happier. By-the-by, you should get at your daisy chains in that way. Beguile some little girl.”

“But I did. I took that Morton mite for a walk in the meadows, and timidly broached the subject. And she reproached me for suggesting ‘frivolous pursuits.’ It was a horrible disappointment.”

“The governess here,” said Aubrey Vair, “is robbing that child of its youth in a terrible way. ⁴⁶⁴What will a life be that has no childhood at the beginning?

“Some human beings are never young,” he continued, “and they never grow up. They lead absolutely colourless lives. They are—they are etiolated. They never love, and never feel the loss of it. They are—for the moment I can think of no better image—they are human flowerpots, in which no soul has been planted. But a human soul properly growing must begin in a fresh childishness.”

“Yes,” said the dark lady, thoughtfully, “a careless childhood, running wild almost. That should be the beginning.”

“Then we pass through the wonder and diffidence of youth.”

“To strength and action,” said the dark lady. Her dreamy eyes were fixed on the Downs, and her fingers tightened on her knees as she spoke. “Ah, it is a grand thing to live—as a man does—self-reliant and free.”

“And so at last,” said Aubrey Vair, “come to the culmination and crown of life.” He paused and glanced hastily at her. Then he dropped his voice almost to a whisper—“And the culmination of life is love.”

Their eyes met for a moment, but she looked away at once. Aubrey Vair felt a peculiar thrill and a catching in his breath, but his emotions were too complex for analysis. He had a certain sense of surprise, also, at the way his conversation had developed.

Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt suddenly dug him in the chest with her ear-trumpet, and some one at tennis bawled, “Love all!”

“Did I tell you Jane’s girls have had scarlet fever?” asked Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt.

“No,” said Aubrey Vair.

“Yes; and they are peeling now,” said Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt, shutting her lips tightly, and nodding in a slow, significant manner at both of them.

There was a pause. All three seemed lost in thought, too deep for words.

“Love,” began Aubrey Vair, presently, in a severely philosophical tone, leaning back in his chair, holding his hands like a praying saint’s in front of him, and staring at the toe of his shoe,—“love is, I believe, the one true and real thing in life. It rises above reason, interest, or explanation. Yet I never read of an age when it was so much forgotten as it is now. Never was love expected to run so much in appointed channels, never was it so despised, checked, ordered, and obstructed. Policemen say, ‘This way, Eros!’ As a result, we relieve our emotional possibilities in the hunt for gold and notoriety. And after all, with the best fortune in these, we only hold up the gilded images of our success, and are weary slaves, with unsatisfied hearts, in the pageant of life.”

Aubrey Vair sighed, and there was a pause. The girl looked at him out of the mysterious darkness of her eyes. She had read many books, but Aubrey Vair was her first literary man, and she took this kind of thing for genius—as girls have done before.

“We are,” continued Aubrey Vair, conscious of a favourable impression,—“we are like fireworks, mere dead, inert things until the appointed spark comes; and then—if it is not damp—the dormant soul blazes forth in all its warmth and beauty. That is living. I sometimes think, do you know, that we should be happier if we could die soon after that golden time, like the Ephemerides. There is a decay sets in.”

“Eigh?” said Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt, startingly. “I didn’t hear you.”

“I was on the point of remarking,” shouted Aubrey Vair, wheeling the array of his thoughts,—“I was on the point of remarking that few people in Redhill could match Mrs. Morton’s fine broad green.”

“Others have noticed it,” Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt shouted back. “It is since she has had in her new false teeth.”

This interruption dislocated the conversation a little. However—

“I must thank you, Mr. Vair,” said the dark girl, when they parted that afternoon, “for having given me very much to think about.”

And from her manner, Aubrey Vair perceived clearly he had not wasted his time.

It would require a subtler pen than mine to tell how from that day a passion for Miss Smith grew like Jonah’s gourd in the heart of Aubrey Vair. He became pensive, and in the prolonged absence of Miss Smith, irritable. Mrs. Aubrey Vair felt the change in him, and put it down to a vitriolic Saturday Reviewer. Indisputably the “Saturday” does at times go a little far. He re-read “Elective Affinities,” and lent it to Miss Smith. Incredible as it may appear to members of the Areopagus Club, where we know Aubrey Vair, he did also beyond all question inspire a sort of passion in that sombre-eyed, rather clever, and really very beautiful girl.

He talked to her a lot about love and destiny, and all that bric-à-brac of the minor poet. And they talked together about his genius. He elaborately, though discreetly, sought her society, and presented and read to her the milder of his unpublished sonnets. We consider his Byronic features pasty, but the feminine mind has its own laws. I suppose, also, where a girl is not a fool, a literary man has an enormous advantage over any one but a preacher, in the show he can make of his heart's wares.

At last a day in that summer came when he met her alone, possibly by chance, in a quiet lane towards Horley. There were ample hedges on either side, rich with honeysuckle, vetch, and mullein.

They conversed intimately of his poetic ambitions, and then he read her those verses of his subsequently published in "Hobson's Magazine:" "Tenderly ever, since I have met thee." He had written these the day before; and though I think the sentiment is uncommonly trite, there is a redeeming note of sincerity about the lines not conspicuous in all Aubrey Vair's poetry.

He read rather well, and a swell of genuine emotion crept into his voice as he read, with one white hand thrown out to point the rhythm of the lines. "Ever, my sweet, for thee," he concluded, looking up into her face.

Before he looked up, he had been thinking chiefly of his poem and its effect. Straightway he forgot it. Her arms hung limply before her, and her hands were clasped together. Her eyes were very tender.

“Your verses go to the heart,” she said softly.

Her mobile features were capable of wonderful shades of expression. He suddenly forgot his wife and his position as a minor poet as he looked at her. It is possible that his classical features may themselves have undergone a certain transfiguration. For one brief moment—and it was always to linger in his memory—destiny lifted him out of his vain little self to a nobler level of simplicity. The copy of “Tenderly ever” fluttered from his hand. Considerations vanished. Only one thing seemed of importance.

“I love you,” he said abruptly.

An expression of fear came into her eyes. The grip of her hands upon one another tightened convulsively. She became very pale.

Then she moved her lips as if to speak, bringing her face slightly nearer to his. There was nothing in the world at that moment for either of them but one another. They were both trembling exceedingly. In a whisper she said, “You love me?”

Aubrey Vair stood quivering and speechless, looking into her eyes. He had never seen such a light as he saw there before. He was in a wild tumult of emotion. He was dreadfully scared at what he had done. He could not say another word. He nodded.

“And this has come to me?” she said presently, in the same awe-stricken whisper, and then, “Oh, my love, my love!”

And thereupon Aubrey Vair had her clasped to himself, her cheek upon his shoulder and his lips to hers.

Thus it was that Aubrey Vair came by the cardinal memory of his life. To this day it recurs in his works.

A little boy clambering in the hedge some way down the lane saw this group with surprise, and then with scorn and contempt. Recking nothing of his destiny, he turned away, feeling that he at least could never come to the unspeakable unmanliness of hugging girls. Unhappily for Reigate scandal, his shame for his sex was altogether too deep for words.

An hour after, Aubrey Vair returned home in a hushed mood. There were muffins after his own heart for his tea—Mrs. Aubrey Vair had had hers. And there were chrysanthemums, chiefly white ones,—flowers he loved,—set out in the china bowl he was wont to praise. And his wife came behind him to kiss him as he sat eating.

“De lill Jummuns,” she remarked, kissing him under the ear.

Then it came into the mind of Aubrey Vair with startling clearness, while his ear was being kissed, and with his mouth full of muffin, that *life is a singularly complex thing*.

The summer passed at last into the harvest-time, and the leaves began falling. It was evening, the warm sunset light still touched the Downs, but up the valley a blue haze was creeping. One or two lamps in Reigate were already alight.

About half-way up the slanting road that scales the Downs, there is a wooden seat where one may obtain a fine view of the red villas scattered below, and of the succession of blue hills beyond. Here the girl with the shadowy face was sitting.

She had a book on her knees, but it lay neglected. She was leaning forward, her chin resting upon her hand. She was looking across the valley into the darkening sky, with troubled eyes.

Aubrey Vair appeared through the hazel-bushes, and sat down beside her. He held half a dozen dead leaves in his hand.

She did not alter her attitude. “Well?” she said.

“Is it to be flight?” he asked.

Aubrey Vair was rather pale. He had been having bad nights latterly, with dreams of the Continental Express Mrs. Aubrey Vair possibly even in pursuit,—he always fancied her making the tragedy ridiculous by tearfully bringing additional pairs of socks, and any such trifles he had forgotten, with

her,—all Reigate and Redhill in commotion. He had never eloped before, and he had visions of difficulties with hotel proprietors. Mrs. Aubrey Vair might telegraph ahead. Even he had had a prophetic vision of a headline in a halfpenny evening newspaper: “Young Lady abducts a Minor Poet.” So there was a quaver in his voice as he asked, “Is it to be flight?”

“As you will,” she answered, still not looking at him.

“I want you to consider particularly how this will affect you. A man,” said Aubrey Vair, slowly, and staring hard at the leaves in his hand, “even gains a certain éclat in these affairs. But to a woman it is ruin—social, moral.”

“This is not love,” said the girl in white.

“Ah, my dearest! Think of yourself.”

“Stupid!” she said, under her breath.

“You spoke?”

“Nothing.”

“But cannot we go on, meeting one another, loving one another, without any great scandal or misery? Could we not—”

“That,” interrupted Miss Smith, “would be unspeakably horrible.”

“This is a dreadful conversation to me. Life is so intricate, such a web of subtle strands binds us this way and that. I cannot tell what is right. You must consider -”

“A man would break such strands.”

“There is no manliness,” said Aubrey Vair, with a sudden glow of moral exaltation, “in doing wrong. My love—”

“We could at least die together, dearest,” she said discontentedly.

“Good Lord!” said Aubrey Vair. “I mean—consider my wife.”

“You have not considered her hitherto.”

“There is a flavour—of cowardice, of desertion, about suicide,” said Aubrey Vair. “Frankly, I have the English prejudice, and do not like any kind of running away.”

Miss Smith smiled very faintly. “I see clearly now what I did not see. My love and yours are very different things.”

“Possibly it is a sexual difference,” said Aubrey Vair; and then, feeling the remark inadequate, he relapsed into silence.

They sat for some time without a word. The two lights in Reigate below multiplied to a score of bright points, and, above, one star had become visible. She began laughing, an almost noiseless, hysterical laugh that jarred unaccountably upon Aubrey Vair.

Presently she stood up. “They will wonder where I am,” she said. “I think I must be going.”

He followed her to the road. “Then this is the end?” he said, with a curious mixture of relief and poignant regret.

“Yes, this is the end,” she answered, and turned away.

There straightway dropped into the soul of Aubrey Vair a sense of infinite loss. It was an altogether new sensation. She was perhaps twenty yards away, when he groaned aloud with the weight of it, and suddenly began running after her with his arms extended.

“Annie,” he cried,—“Annie! I have been talking *rot*. Annie, now I know I love you! I cannot spare you. This must not be. I did not understand.”

The weight was horrible.

“Oh, stop, Annie!” he cried, with a breaking voice, and there were tears on his face.

She turned upon him suddenly, with a look of annoyance, and his arms fell by his side. His expression changed at the sight of her pale face.

“You do not understand,” she said. “I have said good-bye.”

She looked at him; he was evidently greatly distressed, a little out of breath, and he had just stopped blubbering. His contemptible quality reached the pathetic. She came up close to him, and, taking his damp Byronic visage between her hands, she kissed him again and again. “Good-bye, little man that I loved,” she said; “and good-bye to this folly of love.”

Then, with something that may have been a laugh or a sob,—she herself, when she came to write it all in her novel, did not know which,—she turned and hurried away again, and went out of the path that Aubrey Vair must pursue, at the cross-roads.

Aubrey Vair stood, where she had kissed him, with a mind as inactive as his body, until her white dress had disappeared. Then he gave an involuntary sigh, a large, exhaustive expiration, and so awoke himself, and began walking, pensively dragging his feet through the dead leaves, home. Emotions are terrible things.

“Do you like the potatoes, dear?” asked Mrs. Aubrey Vair at dinner. “I cooked them myself.”

Aubrey Vair descended slowly from cloudy, impalpable meditations to the level of fried potatoes. “These potatoes—” he remarked, after a pause during which he was struggling with recollection. “Yes. These potatoes have exactly the tints of the dead leaves of the hazel.”

“What a fanciful poet it is!” said Mrs. Aubrey Vair. “Taste them. They are very nice potatoes indeed.”

Two Short Stories by Colette

The Other Wife

“Table for two? This way, Monsieur, Madame, there is still a table next to the window, if Madame and Monsieur would like a view of the bay.”

Alice followed the maitre d’.

“Oh, yes. Come on, Marc, it’ll be like having lunch on a boat on the water ...”

Her husband caught her by passing his arm under hers. “We’ll be more comfortable over there.”

“There? In the middle of all those people? I’d much rather ...”

“Alice, please.”

He tightened his grip in such a meaningful way that she turned around. “What’s the matter?”

“Shh ...” he said softly, looking at her intently, and led her toward the table in the middle.

“What is it, Marc?”

“I’ll tell you, darling. Let me order lunch first. Would you like the shrimp? Or the eggs in aspic?”

“Whatever you like, you know that.”

They smiled at one another, wasting the precious time of an over-worked maitre d’, stricken with a kind of nervous dance, who was standing next to them, perspiring.

“The shrimp,” said Marc. “Then the eggs and bacon. And the cold chicken with a romaine salad. *Fromage blanc*? The house specialty? We’ll go with the specialty. Two strong coffees. My chauffeur will be having lunch also, we’ll be leaving again at two o’clock. Some cider? No, I don’t trust it ... Dry champagne.”

He sighed as if he had just moved an armoire, gazed at the colorless midday sea, at the pearly white sky, then at his wife, whom he found lovely in her little Mercury hat with its large, hanging veil.

“You’re looking well, darling. And all this blue water makes your eyes look green, imagine that! And you’ve put on weight since you’ve been traveling ... It’s nice up to a point, but only up to a point!”

Her firm, round breasts rose proudly as she leaned over the table.

Why did you keep me from taking that place next to the window?”

Marc Seguy never considered lying. “Because you were about to sit next to someone I know.”

“Someone I don’t know?”

“My ex-wife.”

She couldn’t think of anything to say and opened her blue eyes wider.

“So what, darling? It’ll happen again. It’s not important.”

The words came back to Alice and she asked, in order, the inevitable questions.

“Did she see you? Could she see that you saw her? Will you point her out to me?”

“Don’t look now, please, she must be watching us ... The lady with brown hair, no hat, she must be staying in this hotel. By herself, behind those children in red ...”

“Yes I see.”

Hidden behind some broad-brimmed beach hats, Alice was able to look at the woman who, fifteen months ago, had still been her husband’s wife.

“Incompatibility,” Marc said. “Oh, I mean ... total incompatibility! We divorced like well-bred people, almost like friends, quietly, quickly. And then I

fell in love with you, and you really wanted to be happy with me. How lucky we are that our happiness doesn't involve any guilty parties or victims!"

The woman in white, whose smooth, lustrous hair reflected the light from the sea in azure patches, was smoking a cigarette with her eyes half closed. Alice turned back toward her husband, took some shrimp and butter, and ate calmly. After a moment's silence she asked: "Why didn't you ever tell me that she had blue eyes, too?"

"Well, I never thought about it!"

He kissed the hand she was extending toward the bread basket and she blushed with pleasure. Dusky and ample, she might have seemed somewhat coarse, but the changeable blue of her eyes and her wavy, golden hair made her look like a frail and sentimental blonde. She vowed overwhelming gratitude to her husband. Immodest without knowing it, everything about her bore the overly conspicuous marks of extreme happiness.

They ate and drank heartily, and each thought the other had forgotten the woman in white. Now and then, however, Alice laughed too loudly, and Marc was careful about his posture, holding his shoulders back, his head up. They waited quite a long time for their coffee, in silence. An incandescent river, the straggled reflection of the invisible sun overhead, shifted slowly across the sea and shone with a blinding brilliance.

"She's still there, you know," Alice whispered.

“Is she making you uncomfortable? Would you like to have coffee somewhere else?”

“No, not at all! She’s the one who must be uncomfortable! Besides, she doesn’t exactly seem to be having a wild time, if you could see her ...”

“I don’t have to. I know that look of hers.”

“Oh, was she like that?”

He exhaled his cigarette smoke through his nostrils and knitted his eyebrows.

“Like that? No. To tell you honestly, she wasn’t happy with me.”

“Oh, really now!”

“The way you indulge me is so charming, darling ... It’s crazy ... You’re an angel ... You love me ... I’m so proud when I see those eyes of yours. Yes, those eyes ... She ... I just didn’t know how to make her happy, that’s all. I didn’t know how.”

“She’s just difficult!”

Alice fanned herself irritably, and cast brief glances at the woman in white, who was smoking, her head resting against the back of the cane chair, her eyes closed with an air of satisfied lassitude.

Marc shrugged his shoulders modestly.

“That’s the right word,” he admitted. “What can you do? You have to feel sorry for people who are never satisfied. But we’re satisfied ... Aren’t we, darling?”

She did not answer. She was looking furtively, and closely, at her husband’s face, ruddy and regular; at his thick hair, threaded here and there with white silk; at his short, well-cared-for hands; and doubtful for the first time, she asked herself, “What more did she want from him?”

And as they were leaving, while Marc was paying the bill and asking for the chauffeur and about the route, she kept looking, with envy and curiosity, at the woman in white, this dissatisfied, this difficult, this superior ...

Ble de Herbe – Chapitre I

Tu vas à la pêche, Vinca?

D'un signe de tête hautain, la Pervenche Vinca aux yeux couleur de pluie printanière, répondit qu'elle allait, en effet, à la pêche. Son chandail reprisé en témoignait, et ses espadrilles racornies par le sel. On savait que sa jupe à carreaux bleus et verts, qui datait de trois ans et laissait voir ses genoux, appartenait à la crevette et aux crabes. Et ces deux havenets sur l'épaule, et ce béret de laine hérissé et bleuâtre comme un chardon des dunes, constituaient-ils une panoplie de pêche, oui ou non?

Elle dépassa celui qui l'avait hélée. Elle descendit vers les rochers, à grandes enjambées de ses fuseaux maigres et bien tournés, couleur de terre cuite. Philippe la regardait marcher, comparant l'une à l'autre Vinca de cette année et Vinca des dernières vacances. A-t-elle fini de grandir? il est temps qu'elle s'arrête. Elle n'a pas plus de chair que l'autre année. Ses cheveux courts s'éparpillent en paille raide et bien dorée, qu'elle laisse pousser depuis quatre mois, mais qu'on ne peut ni tresser ni rouler. Elle a les joues et les mains noires de hâle, le cou blanc comme lait sous ses cheveux, le sourire contraint, le rire éclatant, et si elle ferme étroitement, sur une gorge absente, blousons et chandails, elle trousse jupe et culotte pour descendre à l'eau, aussi haut qu'elle peut, avec une sérénité de petit garçon...

Le camarade qui l'épiait, couché sur la dune à longs poils d'herbe, berçait sur ses bras croisés son menton fendu d'une fossette. Il compte seize ans et demi, puisque Vinca atteint ses quinze ans et demi. Toute leur enfance les a unis, l'adolescence les sépare. L'an passé, déjà, ils échangeaient des répliques aigres, des horions sournois; maintenant le silence, à tout moment, tombe entre eux si lourdement qu'ils préfèrent une bouderie à l'effort de la conversation. Mais Philippe, subtil, né pour la chasse et la tromperie, habille de mystère son mutisme, et s'arme de tout ce qui le gêne. Il ébauche des gestes désabusés, risque des «À quoi bon?... Tu ne peux pas comprendre...», tandis que Vinca ne sait que se taire, souffrir de ce qu'elle tait, de ce qu'elle voudrait apprendre, et se raidir contre le précoce, l'impérieux instinct de tout donner, contre la crainte que Philippe, de jour en jour changé, d'heure en heure plus fort, ne rompe la frêle amarre qui le ramène, tous les ans, de juillet en octobre, au bois touffu incliné sur la mer, aux rochers chevelus de

fucus noir. Déjà il a une manière funeste de regarder son amie fixement, sans la voir, comme si Vinca était transparente, fluide, négligeable...

C'est peut-être l'an prochain qu'elle tombera à ses pieds et qu'elle lui dira des paroles de femme: «Phil! ne sois pas méchant... Je t'aime, Phil, fais de moi ce que tu voudras... Parle-moi, Phil...» Mais cette année elle garde encore la dignité revêche des enfants, elle résiste, et Phil n'aime pas cette résistance.

Il regardait la plate et gracieuse fille, qui descendait à cette heure vers la mer. Il n'avait pas plus l'envie de la caresser que de la battre, mais il la voulait confiante, promise à lui seul, et disponible comme ces trésors dont il rougissait,--pétales séchés, billes d'agate, coquilles et graines, images, petite montre d'argent...

Attends-moi, Vinca! Je vais à la pêche avec toi! cria-t-il.

Elle ralentit le pas sans se retourner. Il l'atteignit en quelques bonds et s'empara d'un des havenets.

Pourquoi en avais-tu pris deux?

J'ai pris la petite poche pour les trous étroits, et mon havenet à moi, comme d'habitude.

Il plongeait dans les yeux bleus son plus doux regard noir:

Alors ce n'était pas pour moi?

En même temps il lui offrait la main pour franchir le mauvais couloir de rochers, et le sang monta sous le hâle des joues de Vinca. Un geste nouveau, un regard nouveau suffisaient à la confondre. Hier, ils battaient les falaises, sondaient les trous côte à côte--à chacun son risque... Aussi lesté que lui, elle ne se souvenait pas d'avoir requis l'aide de Phil...

Un peu de douceur, Vinca! pria-t-il en souriant, parce qu'elle a retiré sa main d'un trop grand geste anguleux. Qu'est-ce que tu as donc contre moi?

Elle mordit ses lèvres, fendillées par les plongeons quotidiens, et chemina sur les rochers hérissés de balanes. Elle réfléchissait et se sentait pleine de doute. Qu'a-t-il donc lui-même? Le voici prévenant, charmant, et il vient de lui offrir la main comme à une dame... Elle abaissa lentement la poche de filet dans une cavité où l'eau marine, immobile, révélait des algues, des holoturies, des «loups», rascasses tout en tête et en nageoires, des crabes noirs à passepoils rouges et des crevettes... L'ombre de Phil obscurcit la flaque ensoleillée.

Ôte-toi donc! Tu mets ton ombre sur les crevettes, et puis c'est à moi, ce grand trou-là!

Il n'insista pas et elle pêcha toute seule, impatiente, moins adroit que de coutume. Dix crevettes, vingt crevettes échappèrent à son coup de filet trop

brusque, pour se tapir dans des fissures d'où leurs barbes fines tâtent l'eau et narguent l'engin...

Phil! Viens, Phil! C'en est rempli, de crevettes, et elles ne veulent pas se laisser prendre!

Il approcha, nonchalant, se pencha sur le petit abîme pullulant:

Naturellement! C'est que tu ne sais pas...

Je sais très bien, cria Vinca aigrement, seulement je n'ai pas la patience.

Phil enfonça le havenet dans l'eau et le tint immobile.

Dans la fente de rocher, chuchota Vinca derrière son épaule, il y en a de belles, belles... Tu ne vois pas leurs cornes?

Non. Ça n'a pas d'importance. Elles viendront bien.

Tu crois ça!

Mais oui. Regarde.

Elle se pencha davantage, et ses cheveux battirent, comme une aile courte et prisonnière, la joue de son compagnon. Elle recula, puis revint d'un

mouvement insensible, pour reculer encore. Il ne parut pas s'en apercevoir, mais sa main libre attira le bras nu, hâlé et salé, de Vinca.

Regarde, Vinca... La plus belle, qui vient...

Le bras de Vinca, qu'elle déroba, glissa jusqu'au poignet dans la main de Phil comme dans un bracelet, car il ne le serrait pas.

Tu ne l'auras pas, Phil, elle est repartie...

Pour suivre mieux le jeu de la crevette, Vinca rendit son bras, jusqu'au coude, à la main demi-fermée. Dans l'eau verte, la longue crevette d'agate grise tâtait du bout des pattes, du bout des barbes, le bord du havenet. Un coup de poignet, et... Mais le pêcheur tardait, savourant peut-être l'immobilité du bras docile à sa main, le poids d'une tête voilée de cheveux qui s'appuya, un moment vaincue, à son épaule, puis s'écarta, farouche...

Vite, Phil, vite, relève le filet!... Oh! elle est partie! Pourquoi l'as-tu laissée partir?

Phil respira, laissa tomber sur son amie un regard où l'orgueil, étonné, méprisait un peu sa victoire; il délivra le bras mince, qui ne réclamait point de liberté, et brouillant, à coups de havenet, toute la flaque claire:

Oh! elle reviendra... Il n'y a qu'à attendre...

Poetry

To Market by Caitlyn Goss

To market to market to buy potato

“Home again home again”, says Justin Trudeau

To landlord to landlord to pay for my rent

E transfer e transfer, keep social distance

To Baker to Baker to buy me some bread

Stay home stay home, we’ll deliver instead

To Shoppers to Shoppers to buy toilet paper

“Out of stock. out of stock. please try again later”

To Wine Rack to Wine Rack I need some liquor

“Sanitize please” says the retail worker

Everyone’s working to prevent the spread

You can do your part too, use your head

Two Poems by Dennis Brady

How You Got There

Who knows how they got there
Or who they were before
They didn't know the true meaning
Of what it's like to be poor

Searching for it
looking all around
Asking people for hand outs
Don't wanna sleep on the hard ground

Day after day night after night
They learn to be tough and learn to fight
Too many end up here
Living on the street
It's getting cold outside
No boots on their feet

Who are they what are their names
Some try to forget
They don't care to remember
Can't take the pain.

Why do they want to stay there
Sleeping on concrete
The only home they know now
Is their home on the streets

The struggle and the hurt
It never goes away
As time passes by
Gets harder with each passing day

Throughout the night
They're looking to score
Gotta do whatever It takes
Smashing the windows of a store over on 4th

The dealers and the thieves
That once were doctors and lawyers
They are bleeding and pleading their way
Not knowing they are
Crossing over without borders

No one knows what brought them here
Or the struggle
The gut wrenching pain

They all have one thing in common

And always remember
that's a human being
With hands out
Asking for your change

In Full View

Sitting here wondering why
I let myself get here
Always gettin' high
We sometimes go a little too far
If you let it go too long
You no doubt lose,
just who you are
You get to those places
And you just can't get it out
Never knowing of it and
seeing too many faces

When you don't know
what's coming next
Always holding and keeping from you those cards close to
your chest
When you can see it

the coming days of the new
You feel it in your heart cause
everything is clear now it's clear and in full view

When is it the right time?
Why can't you see
when it matters most
It's hard to come up with the perfect rhyme
We listen and talk to the trees
Asking for guidance wondering what to do
The answer you're looking for is abundant in the breeze
Every now and then when
you've lost the game
Where to go or who to trust comes along out of nowhere, now and then

When you can't find what's coming next
Always hiding and keeping from us the cards close to your chest
When you can see it coming the days of the new
You find it in your heart 'cause it's clear now it's clear and in full view

When we are ready and full with everything it takes
it's easier to clear your mind getting set losing the bad letting go of
everything that aches
It will all come together like it should
Welcome it, accept it, take in all it has to offer, those coming days of the
new

Let it it all go just let it be
Here itiz now everything you've ever wanted
All the crazy beautiful dreams
All the bad times and all those shitty days
Will come 'round to you like it should, in the background it's the purple
rayz
Never forget who you are, or why you're here
Keeping it real all through the haze

I'm feelin' blue
But now it's me and you
And the things we do
That make it real and true

Poet's Statement:

I ended up being homeless not too long ago for a few months. And one night I was in the parking lot of 7/11 at around 4am. And these two homeless guys were doing a drug deal on the west side of the building facing the parking lot and I was just watching their body language, and obviously being there witnessing that life first hand gives you a much broader and real life perspective that truly gives validity to the whole experience. And having seen that little piece of action inspired me to write that poem.

i am a fool by Wing Wing Fung

i am a fool
for believing that life
is intertwined and
created to my taste.

i am a fool
for believing and falling
for the micro problems
that inhibit my human experience
of the present

drowned in thoughts,
feelings, and things
i have been conditioned
to be my reality,

i have lost touch
with enjoying the present.
the mindless moment of the all.

to be lost amidst bliss
and find pleasure
between the self induced chaos.

turn off ...

the jarring feelings of anxiety

and enjoy the

contemporary way of life

of being free of primal traumas

and blocking out ... modern problems.

no longer shall we confine ourselves

within our own mental prisons

and see things for what they are.

see our life for what it is

- a mindless,

comical,

self controlled reality

engulfed in comfort,

safety,

and peace

A Poem about my Writing Struggles by Ekaterina Aksenenko

Yet another paper,
Yet another struggle,
There are no choices
I could freely juggle.

There is no freedom
As to what I am writing.
Care not professors
That inside – I am fighting.

Introducing topic
Of no much importance,
I proceed to body
That goes in discordance
With my inner feelings,
senses
and
emotions.

I conclude my paper
With obscure wording
Curiously wondering
If they call it “learning”?

Had it not been better
To allow students
Express in their paper
 Feelings,
 thoughts,
 reflections (Clarke & Hutchinson, 2018, p.187).

Had it not been better
To encourage students
Discuss in their writings
Things they deem important.

It could be much better,
Had narrative writings
Played the role of exits
Out of the closet.

Art

Spring Time



Daffodils by Teresa T



Camellias by Anna D

Level Playing Field by Sarah Haxby



The “Level Playing Field” painting series take a humorous look at the myths we perpetuate in society through the use of passive and active body language. The pieces juxtapose classical museum female painted nudes, and contemporary sports figures from news photography.

This series was created when I was in the town of Aberystwyth, undertaking a Masters degree at the University of Wales, as a Canadian student. In the UK for the first time, I was quite impressed with the many racks of tabloids and magazines that crowded the doorways and checkout aisles of newsstands and corner shops – more so, it seems, then in Canada.

I skimmed through countless numbers of these publications, wanting to catch some of the local flavor. I began to notice that the majority of sports coverage and interviews with men, and photographs of men playing team sports. Much of this type of photography was excellent, depicting high-impact and kinetic moments that are part of rugby and football. There was the occasional picture of sportswomen, at an average ratio of one to nine. However, photos of the female athletes rarely showed women in action. These were mostly close-up portraits, or static poses of female athletes with trophies. There were no pictures of women slamming gleefully into each other, body checking, or running.

Paradoxically, I was studying classical art while encountering the UK tabloid media. For the most part, women in Sports sections were more frequently depicted in advertizing, adopting poses more passive than active, more “classic” than “modern.” At best, I realized, these contemporary commercial depictions were not so different from the poses in many classical, painted, female portraits.

I began to wonder, what is the measure of the myth of equality these days? Is there equality in depicting gender in the same fashion, when it rarely seems “fashionable” to do so? Can equality ever exist in the popular media, which tends to feed the basic desires of the majority?

These thoughts inspired me to paint the “Level Playing Field” series. The paintings illustrate a curiosity about what is beautiful. They also explore the

way in which humanity creates imagery that reflects what we desire and therefore what we find beautiful.

I enjoy juxtaposition these two extremes: the passive “immortalized” classical female form set next to the hyperkinetic contemporary men of sports news photography. I would like to one day hang a gallery exhibit that thematically further combines many of the aesthetics of the “indispensable” classic paintings of feminine beauties who linger in museums with the imagery of “disposable” masculine sports news photos that usually end up in the recycling bin.



The Isolator

By HUGO GERNSBACK

MEMBER AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY



The author at work in his private study aided by the Isolator. Outside noises being eliminated, the worker can concentrate with ease upon the subject at hand.

WHITE STAR LINE.



R.M.S. "TITANIC."

APRIL 14, 1912.

**THIRD CLASS.
BREAKFAST.**

OATMEAL PORRIDGE & MILK
SMOKED HERRINGS, JACKET POTATOES
HAM & EGGS
FRESH BREAD & BUTTER
MARMALADE SWEDISH BREAD
TEA COFFEE

DINNER.

RICE SOUP
FRESH BREAD CABIN BISCUITS
ROAST BEEF, BROWN GRAVY
SWEET CORN BOILED POTATOES
PLUM PUDDING, SWEET SAUCE
FRUIT

TEA.

COLD MEAT
CHEESE PICKLES
FRESH BREAD & BUTTER
STEWED FIGS & RICE
TEA

SUPPER.

GRUEL CABIN BISCUITS CHEESE

Any complaint respecting the Food supplied, want of attention or incivility, should be at once reported to the Purser or Chief Steward. For purposes of identification, each Steward wears a numbered badge on the arm.



